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**EMPOWERMENT OF
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES
IN THE PROCESS OF PRACTICUM**

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with student-teachers with learning disabilities during their practicum, who are about 3%-5% of students in teachers' colleges in Israel. They have special needs that are attended to by Support Centers (in some colleges), which offer practical advice. Most students with learning disabilities are able to cope with their problems in practicum and later on at work. Their mentors and tutors play a crucial role in their progress and development as teachers, though not always aware of their students' special needs.

The research was mainly conducted through interviews with student-teachers with learning disabilities, and their coaches – mentors and tutors, a method which enabled the exposure of the obstacles these students encountered while teaching in class. It was therefore important to find out how to empower these student-teachers and to enhance their progress and development as future teachers.

Consequently this research concentrates on the empowerment factors, whether external (coachers' intervention) or internal (students' reactions, influenced by their own strengths and efforts) that may lead to their success. The crucial role empowerment plays in student-teachers practicum and particularly in the practicum of student-teachers with learning disabilities, led to the building of the new Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model presented in this paper.

This new model adds another tier to the general research of students with learning disabilities by referring specifically to their practicum and to the empowerment process going on in this period. As the empowerment research does not apply to education, this paper integrates empowerment theories in working organizations with schools as organizations, where students are 'employees' and teachers are 'managers'.

In addition to empowerment components the new model contains components of a strong teaching-self which are essential for progress and development, and the basis for the empowerment process. The new Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model also comprises the necessary components related to the coaches' (mentors and tutors) intervention in the empowerment process. The goal of empowerment for the empowered is to gain a relative control over his life, including his professional life.

The end result should be no less than a good teacher, whether it relates to students in general or students with learning disabilities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research deals with the empowerment of student-teachers with learning disabilities (LD) in practicum. It presents an 'Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model' which illustrates the internal and external inputs that could contribute to these student-teachers' empowerment. The internal inputs relate to traits and attributes of the specific population of these students themselves, and the external inputs concern their mentors and tutors who supervise them (explained subsequently). These external inputs relate to tutors and mentors characteristics and patterns, and other important environmental factors that may impact student-teachers' reactions, feelings of empowerment.

Empowerment is defined in the current study as a process of transition from a state of helplessness onto a situation in which one gains a relative control over his life and a critical understanding of his environment. Student-teachers' empowerment would mean going through a process of transition from a state of dependence onto a situation in which they gain a relative control over the teaching situation (their lesson) and a critical understanding of their school environment (pupils, school staff, parents). Nevertheless, the starting point of students with LD may be inferior - in the beginning they may have difficulties to express their abilities, therefore their process of empowerment is usually longer and more complicated.

There are practically no data in research literature dealing specifically with empowerment of student teachers with or without LD during their training period. Therefore Chapter 2 (Theory) deals with 'empowerment', 'learning disabilities', and 'practicum' - each of the topics separately.

The first topic, empowerment, relates to empowerment of individuals, communities and organizations, since there weren't significant articles dealing with empowerment in the education context. The second topic deals with LD as a phenomenon, but only a few articles deal specifically with students with LD in higher education, most of the material relates to children in school. Since I couldn't find studies dealing with students with LD in practicum, the last topic, practicum, concerns all student-teachers not specifically those with LD.

The essential connection between the theoretical subjects and students with LD in practicum is based mainly on interviews of student-teachers with LD and their tutors and mentors in practicum as conducted in this dissertation, and supported by the college assessment papers and support centers' protocols.

All inputs of the 'Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model' are either mentioned in chapter 2 (Theory), or revealed in my research.

In order to understand this dissertation, one has to be familiar with the roles of tutors and mentors who guide the students in practicum.

The College Tutor

The tutor's task includes leading didactic lessons in college, observing and supervising the student and evaluating his/her ability to plan and implement activities in the school or kindergarten class.

All of the college tutors guide the student-teachers in two domains:

1. In college - conducting a didactic lesson for a class of students, once a week (for two academic hours) throughout the academic year (about 28 meetings). The didactic lesson relates to academic issues concerning school topics that students face.
2. In school or in kindergarten - the tutor manages to visit his student about five to ten visits a year.

Not only the student's ability to teach is under observation but also other aspects like his/her mutual relationship with the children and staff. At the same time the tutor observes the mentor too.

The School Mentor

The mentor is the student's training teacher in his/her class. Certain teachers and schools are chosen by the college to train the student-teacher. In every one of those schools a mentor is working with a student-teacher in his class. A mentor has two main tasks:

1. To coach the student in planning and executing lessons and activities.
2. To serve as a model (for teaching).

Chapter 2: Theory

Part A: Empowerment

1. Understanding the Meaning of Empowerment

The concept of 'empowerment' is evidently associated with the meaning of power from which it is derived. It is a concept used by professionals in the social context such as psychologists (Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz & Checkoway, 1992; Gutierrez, Delois & GlenMaye, 1995), educators (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Hermic, Eury & Shellman, 2010), and social workers (Sadan, 2004, 2008). Empowerment is defined as a process of transition from a state of helplessness onto a situation in which one gains a relative control over his life and a critical understanding of his environment. Empowerment of certain deprived groups in society develops as their own reaction against the silencing of their voice in the educational and political discourse (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Gutierrez, DeLois, & GlenMaye, 1995; Roscha, 1997; Menon, 2001; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Sadan, 2004; Freire, 2005; Aloni, 2008).

The use of the concept empowerment is rooted in the radical social actions and ideology that triggered the students' revolt in the French Republic in May 1968. The students wanted some control over their life and the practical outcome of their demonstrations was the dispersion of parliament and President De Gaul's resignation (Rocha, 1997; Sadan, 2004).

Post modern thought claims that common people's knowledge and way of life have an equal position in social, political and educational context. In essence, post modern humanistic thought and education seeks to empower those powerless common people (Aloni, 2003, 2008; Sadan, 2004, 2008).

An example for empowerment in the educational and political domains is the life enterprise of the radical Brazilian Paulo Ferreira who calls for the rehabilitation of poor people's humanity. His educational work aimed at the empowerment of the common Brazilians who cannot read and write - fundamental skills required in the voting ballot. To eliminate illiteracy, Ferreira established schools all over his country (Freire, 2005; Aloni, 2003, 2008).

The following two examples demonstrate that empowerment as a post modern approach and albeit good intentions, is not yet firmly rooted in government education politics. The first example refers to the 'No Child Left Behind'

(NCLB) Act of 2001 U.S.A, mandated that by 2014 all U.S.A pupils must be proficient in Mathematics and Reading (English). With the act's passage all pupils grade 3-8 are evaluated by the same standardized test with sanctions put on schools which don't show the proper achievements. The noble aim of NCLB does not bring into consideration pupils with different backgrounds, children whose mother tongue is not English (although the U.S.A absorbed many millions of immigrants). Keeping the meaning of 'Post Modern Empowerment' in mind, critics argue that pupils' skills would be better assessed along and during the year, enabling the teacher to empower them and tailor instruction to fit them (Levitt, 2008).

The second example is an interesting research addressing 'Post Modern Empowerment' with regards to literacy of two different groups of immigrants in Israel. One group is comprised of student-immigrants from Russia raised in a European tradition of written literacy, and the other includes student-immigrants from Ethiopia who grew up in an African culture of oral literacy.

The post modern approach recognizes different sorts of literacy including 'Traditional written Literacy' and 'Oral Literacy'. This is possible only if the society involved accepts the possibility of a multi-cultural community and is prepared to develop it by an ongoing dialogue between people. Empowerment of immigrants from developing countries could occur if the dominant culture is accessible to them and ready to embrace their tradition and way of life (Peled-Elhanan, 2007).

These two examples of 'Post Modern Empowerment' are relevant for this dissertation, as student-teachers with learning disabilities (LD) are a minority-deprived group within the academic campus. Albeit good intentions to provide them with equal opportunities, in practice their empowerment is yet to be fully achieved.

Empowerment theory and practice is discussed at a micro level (individuals within communities and employees within working organizations), and at a macro level (social communities and organizations' structures) (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

2. 'Individual Empowerment' within the Community– Micro Level

'Individual Empowerment' refers to the enhancement of the individual's traits and abilities which influences his actions, thoughts, and feelings. The enhancement enables him to gain some control over his condition and environment.

'Individual Empowerment' can be presented by three principle components: intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral:

1. The **intrapersonal** component refers to how people think about their ability

to influence social and political systems and how they perceive their own personal traits, like self-efficacy and motivation (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 1990, 1995; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Sadan, 2004, 2008; Hermic, Eury & Shellman, 2010).

2. The **interactional** component refers to interactions between an individual and people in his environment, which enable him to develop social skills of decision making, and problem-solving (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman, 1995; Freire, 2005).

3. The **behavioral** component refers to the specific actions people take to influence the social and political environment, through participation and activity in the community or in the organization (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman, 1995; Drury & Reicher, 2005).

Gaining these assertive properties is a gradual process of empowerment. It includes four stages: 'Era of entry'; 'Era of advancement'; 'Era of incorporation'; 'Era of commitment'.

(1) The 'Era of entry' is the beginning of an active participation in the community. (2) The 'Era of advancement' consists of aspects of mentoring relationships, supportive peer-relationships, and critical understanding of social and political systems. (3) The 'Era of incorporation' is a time when the individual's skills start to mature; survival skills are enhanced and a sense of competence is acquired. (4) The 'Era of commitment' describes the ongoing struggle to integrate the knowledge and skills already acquired into the tissue of everyday life (Kieffer, 1984, Aloni, 2008).

What factors help the individual to move on from one stage to another?

The factors of 'Individual Empowerment' include: participatory competence, a circular effect between participation and individual traits, individual's sense of conflict, and a common feeling of shared integrity and identity.

(1) Participatory competence is acquired by a long term involvement in community affairs and activities which further enhances the participant's knowledge and motivation, boosts his skills and urges him to continue his involvement (Kieffer, 1984; Sadan, 2004).

(2) Participation in community activities strengthens the individual traits, which in a circular way, initiate participation. This circular effect serves as a means for the individual to influence his environment (Zimmerman & Rappaport 1988; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman, 1995, Aloni, 2008).

(3) Daily oppression is not enough to urge an individual to take action. Only a conflict, like a threat to himself and his family, arouses the individual's sense of justice and can sustain and provoke his ongoing empowering response (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1984; Aloni, 2008).

(4) Empowerment is more likely to happen to individuals that share a common feeling of 'integrity' in their daily lives. This means a strong sense of pride and determination and also the feelings of being rooted in the community. Therefore, though empowerment is described as an individual demand, it is matured by the effects of collective efforts or cooperation with others (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1984; Sadan, 2004).

In the field of education, all inexperienced student-teachers, including those with LD, go through similar stages of empowerment and development; they should gain participatory competence by taking part in class by actual teaching and in school affairs. Student-teachers' empowerment would mean going through a process of transition from a state of helplessness onto a situation in which the student gains a relative control over the teaching situation (his lesson) and a critical understanding of his school environment (pupils, school staff, parents). Nevertheless, the starting point of students with LD may be inferior, in the beginning they may have difficulties to express their abilities, and their process of empowerment is usually longer and more complicated (as will be explained in Part B and C).

3. 'Community Empowerment' -

Macro Level

While 'Individual Empowerment' aims at the individual's control over his life (micro level), 'Community Empowerment' is a process of creating a collective that acts to ensure its members' control over their lives and their future as a collective (macro level) (Sadan, 2004, 2008). 'Community Empowerment' is, among other things, the overcoming of difficult experiences of isolation and alienation. It can be realized only in a stable and ongoing connection with others (Sadan, 2004, 2008). Evidently, there is a strong connection between 'Individual Empowerment' and 'Community Empowerment', because of mutual relationships.

The four main factors regarding 'Individual Empowerment' (participatory competence, a circular effect between participation and individual traits, individual's sense of conflict, a common feeling of shared integrity and identity) are also relevant for 'Community Empowerment':

1. Participatory competence can be achieved only in the context of an empowered community. Empowerment refers to an active process, both on the

individual and the communal level which have a mutual influence on one another. It begins with a personal change and continues with an activity for social change within the whole community or vice versa, (Gutierrez, DeLois, & GlenMaye, 1995; Sadan, 2004).

2. A circular effect between participation, individual traits and community's traits is a mutual ongoing process of empowerment which enables people to further gain control over their lives not only as individuals but also as a group. Thus, people who receive help from others can themselves contribute to the community and strengthen it in a circular process of empowerment (Zimmerman & Rappoport, 1988; Gutierrez, GlenMaye, & DeLois, 1995; Sadan 2004).

3. A community sense of conflict builds the community's identity and feeling of empowerment. A community's feeling of conflict can manifest itself in protests and demonstrations against authorities. The implementation of empowerment arouses conflict, because it exposes the methods of the existing services and creates a confrontation with the institutions responsible for the provision of those services. Social institutions might act with violence and try to bar the community from access to information and resources (Sadan, 2004).

4. Feelings of identification with the community have been discussed previously as part of the individual's empowerment. A community may differentiate itself from other groups by some "common critical characteristics" and share the same sense of identification and unity (Sadan, 2004; Drury & Reicher, 2005). Each community is typified by a general feature, like gender, learning disabilities, or physical disability.

A study presents four "common critical characteristics" as building blocks for 'Community Empowerment' and verifies them across three different communities: (1) a belief system which inspires growth, (2) an opportunity role structure that is pervasive, highly accessible, and multifunctional, (3) a strong support system, (4) leadership which motivates peers.

These four "common critical characteristics" are demonstrated by an African-American students' community:

(1) This community of students has a belief system that inspires its members to achieve outstanding academic scores and use all available resources (tutoring services, study groups, bright peers, help of program staff, and research opportunities). In return, all students are viewed as a source of empowerment themselves by helping other African-American students. The belief system focuses beyond self in 'giving back' to the black community by increasing the number of PhDs. In that community, academic success is viewed as a goal both for the individual participants and the group.

(2) All students are encouraged by the program staff to join study groups, are

presented with the opportunity to join internship at leading academic and industry research sites (in summer), and participate in community service, such as help to at-risk children.

(3) The support system offered to the students includes: emotional, academic and financial backing. The support is given through peers, study groups, monitoring of students' progress and help when problems emerge. The staff is viewed as 'parental figures' providing guidance and challenge.

(4) As to leadership – the key individuals, the leaders, inspire and motivate their peers. As they share past experiences with the students and achieve academic excellence, they serve as models to members of their community (Maton & Salem, 1995).

Student-teachers with LD belong to their small community, to the school staff community, and also to the wider general community of students in college. The small community of students with LD shares some common characteristics, which enable them to discuss their problems in practicum among themselves. Being part of the school community is essential for their success in teaching. Their relationships with pupils, school staff members, and parents are critical for their success. It is also important to strengthen their connection with the general community of students and to reinforce their identification with that community.

The 'Community Empowerment' and the 'Individual Empowerment' aspects are both complementary in the same way that 'Organizational Empowerment' and 'Individual Empowerment' at the workplace are.

4. 'Individual Empowerment' within the Organization - Micro Level

The literature on empowerment pays specific attention to empowerment within the organization'. 'Individual Empowerment', sometimes called 'Psychological Empowerment' in a work place, examines how individual employees relate to or experience their work. This perspective is connected to personal beliefs that employees have about their role in relation to the organization (micro level) (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 2007). Although this paper deals with students-teachers in another kind of work place, namely, the education system, an analogy between these seemingly different work places can be drawn.

Researchers, who speak about 'Psychological Empowerment', view it as a cognitive state typified by a sense of perceived control, perceived competence and perceived goal internalization (Menon, 2001).

'Psychological Empowerment' cannot be captured by a single feature. It is a concept containing the individual's work context and personality characteristics,

which in turn motivate individual's behavior (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

A cognitive model of empowerment is directed towards intrinsic task motivation at work and includes individual traits like self-efficacy. It is manifested as a set of perceptions called 'task assessment' (self evaluations) which help employees develop an active relationship with their task. These 'task assessment' include: meaningfulness (the match between the task's demands or goals and the worker's belief (Brief & Nord, 1990)); competence (self efficacy (Gist, 1987)); self determination or choice (the capacity to make decisions (Deci, Conell, & Ryan, 1989)); and impact (the extent to which one can influence results or outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). The core of this model is an ongoing cycle of environmental events, task assessments, interpretive styles (interpretation of one's own success and failure), and behavior in a reciprocal circle (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995, 2007).

The employee's approach to his work and his feelings as a needed, respected worker as well as his self-efficacy and self-determination skills are no doubt important for him and for the organization. In the same way, student-teachers as workers in schools should feel significant and considered necessary. In order to be in control, they should also possess self-efficacy, competence, and self-determination skills. Student-teachers with LD may need to strengthen such skills because of past experience and a lower starting point as beginning teachers (discussed in part B6 – Psychological and behavioral difficulties, and B7- Factors contributing to success in the academic field and beyond).

The employees' positive approach to their work is not enough to empower them; no less significant is the structure of the organization, which has a strong impact on its workers.

5. 'Social-Structured Empowerment' at the Work Place – Macro Level

'Social-Structured Empowerment' refers to organizational efforts or organizational role as generating empowerment among its members (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), by appropriate social-structured conditions (macro level) (Conger& Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 2007).

'Social-Structured Empowerment' at work is about empowering structures of the organization and is rooted in democratic values. It is based on the idea of sharing some power between employees and employers, and letting the decision-making power flow down to the lower levels of the organization (Liden & Arad, 1996; Menon, 2001; Spreitzer, 2007). According to this approach power ideally resides within individuals at all levels of a system (Prasad, 2001; Prasad & Eylon, 2001; Spreitzer, 2007).

Organizations may not be empowering for participants who expect to become

involved in decision making and problem solving, but find out they must first work their way through a hierarchy that provides few opportunities for meaningful involvement. Similarly, individuals may be empowered if they exercise decision making, open leadership and communal projects (Prestby, Wandersman & Chavis, 1990). These skills could be applied if employees have access to 'power tools' such as: power, knowledge, information and reward at all levels (Kanter, 1977). 'Power tools' are mentioned in several studies, each of them stating somewhat different (Spreitzer, 2007).

In a large national organization which delivers human services to people with disabilities, the power tools for empowerment are presented as six pathways: opportunities for job autonomy; freedom to be creative; gaining job relevant knowledge; feeling trusted and respected; experiencing job fulfillment; participating in decision making (Foster-Fisherman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler, & Yapchai 1998).

A different description of 'power tools' maintains: low role ambiguity - people knowing the extent of their authority and what is expected of them; span of control - managers with more subordinates tend to share responsibility; sociopolitical support - approval from organizational constituencies; access to information, access to resources, and participative unit climate. Taken together, these features are seen as encouraging autonomy, innovation, commitment and a sense of environment control (Spreitzer, 1996, 2007).

Organization efforts to empower its members may derive from the organization's structure or from the employees' response to these structures. These two points of view – the micro oriented psychological view, and the macro oriented social related perspective (Zimmerman 1995; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Spreitzer, 2007) are distinguished by the focus of empowerment.

Schools and colleges organization-structures should provide the features which would enable student-teachers the opportunities to gain 'power tools' for their development, like: freedom to be creative, access to information, access to resources, and participative unit climate. Student-teachers should be given the responsibility to teach, take an active part in managing the class and participate in parents' meetings, especially student-teachers with LD. Student-teachers with LD may find it more difficult to respond to these structures even if provided by the organizations (schools and colleges), since they may have less confidence and self-efficacy because of their life/school history and difficulties coping with their learning disabilities (as explained in Part B).

6. Professional Involvement

'Individual-Psychological Empowerment', 'Community-Empowerment' and 'Organizational Empowerment' are previously discussed, but though the potential of empowerment exists within all people, in our social reality, the powerless cannot always realize their potential all by themselves (Sadan, 2008). This is true also in regards to students with LD, which are at the core of this dissertation.

Professionals who deal with social change are part of empowerment and may encourage or discourage it. In most cases the process of empowerment is possible because of the intervention of professionals.

A professional practice of empowerment is a systematic intervention in people's life that is tuned to encourage 'Individual Empowerment' and 'Communal Empowerment' processes. The professionals should be deeply interested in the individual (or community) personal narrative and understand his unique circumstances (Sadan, 2008).

One of the important tasks of the professional is to teach and train people and have them acquire knowledge and skills. This process should be mutual - the client is going through the process of empowerment, and the professional (who listens and learns from the client about his social preferences) should also experience professional growth. Since many of the deprived people experience failures in school, the expert has got to find the right way to teach them. He should hold back his power so that the balance between his authority and the people's voice is kept (Sadan, 2004). The process of encouraging independence and autonomy within the empowered people is not always easy. Disappointment of professionals is sometimes the negative result of not letting go, not letting community members cope by themselves or have their own way (Gutierrez, GlenMaye, & DeLois, 1995). One of the tasks of the professional is to be his clients' advocate and representative towards the environment and the establishment. The expert's use of advocacy as part of 'Professional Empowerment', has to be exerted carefully – on one hand he is a leader in a certain situation, on the other hand he should not take control over people (Sadan, 2004).

Student-teachers with LD meet two types of experts – professionals at the support center in college and professionals in practicum (in school while teaching). The experts at the support center meet the students with LD only at the support center. Although they enhance the student-teacher with special strategies to cope with the academic field, they never observe the student's teaching in school, and are not involved in the school culture. Moreover, most of them do not necessarily have experience and knowledge about teaching. The second type of professionals, which are the main force training the student-

teacher, include the school mentor and college tutor. The student-teacher's mentor meets him each day in school and observes him teaching, and the tutor who teaches the student in college, visits him only occasionally in school. Although they are directly involved in the training and development of the student as a teacher, and are the main experts in this field, they have little or no background in learning disabilities. This dissertation discusses the significant contribution of the mentor and tutor to the student-teachers' with LD empowerment in practicum.

Since the empowerment of students with LD in the process of practicum is the theme of this paper, the next chapter will explain the development of the definitions and legislations concerning LD, pupils and students with LD. Furthermore, what are the characteristics of students with LD who enter higher education, what empowers them, and what makes it possible for them to cope with everyday challenges in college and school with relative success.

Part B: Students with Learning Disabilities (LD)

1. LD – Changes over Time

Definitions of LD and their applications for education change with time, because of changes in social conceptions, laws and the advancement of research. In the 1960s, the definitions of people with LD included people with other disabilities (mental retardation, minimal brain damage). In the course of time, the definitions of various deficiencies changed and LD were perceived as a separate category (Deisinger, 2004).

The widest definition of LD which still prevails today was legislated in 1975 by IDEA¹ in the U.S: "...a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, talk, read, write, and spell or to do mathematical calculations".

In 1977 this definition (IDEA) became more operative by the use of the term 'discrepancy', namely, "a severe discrepancy between achievements and intellectual ability, in one or more academic skills..."(Deisinger, 2004). This definition with minor changes is still acceptable in the U.S.A. and other states, including Israel (Sharoni & Vogel, 2007). DSM IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) asserted in 1994 that LD is diagnosed when "a person's achievements in individually administered standard tests in reading, mathematics, or writing, are significantly lower than expected, according to his age, his studies, and the level of his intelligence. LD is significantly disrupting academic achievements or everyday activities that involve reading, mathematics, or writing" (Shani & Nevo, 2006).

In 2004 reauthorization of the IDEA² permits the United States and countries around the world to discontinue use of IQ-achievement discrepancy in favor of 'Response to Intervention' (RTI) to define a person with LD. The RTI definition identifies pupils as suffering from LD when their response to validated teachers' intensive instructions and intervention, that involves one or more rounds of research-based small-group and individual tutoring, is dramatically inferior to that of peers. Advantages of this definition include earlier identification (one does not have to wait for a two year discrepancy), focus on prevention, and assessment with clearer implications to work on academic assignments (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007).

¹ 'Individuals with Disabilities Education Act' (IDEA)/ 'Education for All Handicapped Children' Act of 1975, 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.* Retrieved October 25, 2009.
available at: <http://www.scn.org/~bk269/94-142.html>

² 'Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act' of 2004, U.S.C. (PI 108-446)

The proposed changes of diagnostic criterion for LD in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- asserted in 2013) reflect an alignment with options for LD identification as 'Response to Intervention' (RTI) outlined above in 2004. This criterion allows the consideration of school-based reports of responsiveness to intervention as well as clinical, medical, and family reports. LD are termed in the DSM-5 – 'Specific Learning Disabilities' because the disability relates to a specific learning disorder or to life-long disability that does not disappear on its own, but may improve if the individuals are provided with targeted instruction in the areas they experience difficulty. The proposed diagnostic criteria include the following:

- A. Persistent difficulty learning academic skills for at least 6 months despite intervention targeting the area(s) of difficulty. Many schools use a RTI model of academic skill assessment and progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of interventions. The areas of documented academic skill difficulties include:
 - 1. Word decoding and word reading fluency
 - 2. Reading comprehension
 - 3. Spelling
 - 4. Writing difficulties such as grammar, punctuation, organization, and clarity
 - 5. Number sense, fact and calculation
 - 6. Mathematical reasoning
- B. The affected academic skills are substantially below expectations given the individual's age (at least 1.5 standard deviation below average) and result in impaired functioning in school, at work and in activities of daily living.
- C. LD is readily apparent in the early years, however it is not to be diagnosed until the onset of school years; in some individuals the disorder is not apparent until the onset of a demand for higher-level skills.
- D. The academic and learning difficulties occur in the absence of:
 - 1. Intellectual Disabilities
 - 2. Visual or hearing impairments
 - 3. Mental disorders (e.g. depression, anxiety, etc.)
 - 4. Neurological disorders
 - 5. Psycho-social difficulty
 - 6. Language differences
 - 7. Lack of access to adequate instruction

Although many students may have learning difficulties, learning disabilities are distinguished from learning difficulties by the above four defined criteria. The four diagnostic criteria of DSM-5:2013, relate to an academic disorder that occurs in individuals identified as having at least normal intelligence, although it may also occur in individuals identified as gifted. Despite the level of measured intelligence, the individual persists in having difficulties learning and using academic skills. LD also can affect an individual's adaptive skills across the lifespan. Difficulties with relationships, overall poorer mental health and higher rates of unemployment are some characteristics associated with LD. However, the presentation of symptoms may differ from one person to another.

In a parallel process to the U.S.A, the Israeli legislation of laws concerning handicapped people, unfolds the consistent development aimed exclusively at the community of people with LD.

In order to understand the development and change of definitions of LD, we have to understand the increasing comprehension of the phenomenon and its applications.

In 1988 the Special Education Law in Israel³ related to the right of all children with special needs (physical, mental, emotional-behavioral, sensual, cognitive, language, developmental, including LD) for special education. According to this law, children with serious LD sat in a special education class with children who suffered from other serious disabilities.

Later in 2002, Section D1 of the 'Special Education Law', Israel, sec. 20-G-2 authorized the integration of children with LD in regular schools, separating those with LD from others and providing special education hours as part of the necessary intervention program in the regular class.

Some years later, another important law based on principals of equality, humanity, and people's dignity was 'Equal Rights for People with Disability Law', Israel 1998 sec. A-1⁴. The restoration of this law paved the way for people with LD to higher education by relating to: "a person with cognitive disabilities", and emphasizing access to higher education, supporting aids and services - 'Equal Rights for People with Disability' Law, 2005 sec.5, A 19-22 Israel. This law means that a person with disabilities has the same right as anyone else to participate fully and equally in community life (Gillis, 2003).

The most important law concerning students with LD in higher education was coined – 'The Rights of Students with LD in Higher Education' Law, 2008,

³'Special Education Law', Israel, Law book 4358, 1988. Retrieved October 25, 2009.

available at: <http://www.science.co.il/Education/Special-Education-in-Israel.pdf>

⁴'Equal Rights for People with Disability Law', 5758, 1998 sec. A-1, Israel. Retrieved October 12, 2009.
available at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Isroaue/Health/TheEqualR>

Israel.⁵ This law calls to enable students with LD the proper accommodations during the admission process to college and during the academic year, but has yet to be fully implemented. According to this law, students' rights for accommodations include:

1. Entrance procedures including tests to identify LD.
2. Academic adjustments during their studies.

For years, most of the studies dealt with children (pupils) with LD. The interest in adults (students) with LD has grown as researchers and educators acknowledged LD as a lifelong phenomenon (Sharoni & Vogel, 2007).

In the course of the last two decades several studies have been carried out to identify the characteristics and needs of adults with LD in higher education. Accordingly, laws have been passed and adjustments and services have been planned (Johnson, Ann & Dolle, 2003). Same as with schools, different higher education institutes provide diverse services to students with LD (Sharoni & Vogel, 2007).

The statistics concerning the increasing number of pupils and adult students with LD who apply for accommodations demonstrates the remarkable change in social awareness and public opinion.

According to U.S Department of Education, in 2000 more than 2.8 million pupils in school were identified as having LD (Hallahan & Mock, 2006), In 2005 this population of pupils tripled and is expected to increase, as larger numbers of pupils currently are served by school support programs (Beale, 2005).

As for postsecondary education (beyond high school), in 2002 2% - 2.8% of all secondary students in England, U.S.A and Israel were students with LD. In the same year in Israel, six teacher training colleges declared having 2.7% of their students with LD. The data provided by support personnel in the colleges reflects the proportion of students receiving accommodations and support services (Sharoni & Vogel, 2007).

The dramatic increase in the number of students with LD who are admitted to higher education is due primarily to four factors (Beale, 2005):

- Laws and legislation.

⁵ The Rights of Students with Learning Disabilities in Higher Education Law, 2008, Israel, Retrieved October 12, 2009.
available at: www.open.ac.il/ld/download/TV120.pdf(Electronic version – Hebrew

- The large number of students identified as having LD since the first definition had been recognized in 1975.
- Transition planning at the secondary level.
- The efforts of the postsecondary education to provide adequate services.

It is reasonable to assume that in the past many of these pupils and adult-students were not identified at all and did not get an answer to their problems. Nowadays, a growing number of these pupils and students get help in support centers, whether in school or in the university. Since LD is a neurobiological and psychological phenomenon, it persists over age, but may change its appearance over the years. Adults with LD are also more aware of their difficulties and their functional impact, and obtain coping strategies that help them to manage their lives.

Lately, it has become clear to experts that the phenomenon of LD relates to cognitive, emotional and social aspects, which may express themselves in different areas of life. The awareness of that phenomenon is accompanied by a growing social legitimacy of LD, and the acknowledgment that students with LD should be given professional assistance relevant to their diverse needs, in order to have an equal opportunity to fully develop their potential (Hieman & Kariv, 2004; Estrada, Dupox & Wolman, 2006; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Leyszer & Grinberger, 2008; Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila & Fave, 2008; Maydosz & Raver, 2010).

2. Memory Problems

Memory difficulties relate to deficiencies in one or all of the processes of encoding, storing, and retrieving information from memory.

- Encoding relates to the process of translating sensory input (sight, touch, smell) into representational forms which can be stored. Encoding of items can occur relatively automatically, as when we remember a story or television program (but not always, as when we prepare for an exam). Memory storage refers to the durability of the memory code, once it has been created. A common observation of teachers is that their students with LD seem to learn something one day, and forget it the next. It could occur for several reasons, most likely because the information was not encoded in a form durable for long term retention.

- Retrieval refers to the ability to extract the information quickly and accurately. This can happen automatically when we identify colors or letters, or it can

involve a consciously directed effort, when we try to remember some learning material or an event long forgotten. Speed of retrieval could be as important as accuracy (in a test, while reading). These processes can occur with different quantities of information for different durations of time. Some types of information, relatively in small amount, appear to be stored in consciousness for relatively brief periods of time in short term memory – STM - and then completely forgotten; whereas other types of information, relatively in a large capacity, appear to last indefinitely in long term memory - LTM (Swanson & Siegel, 2001).

- Storing refers to the keeping of information. Some studies distinct between STM and the WM (working memory) and see them as operating independently. While STM is used to describe situations in which the material is held passively and then reproduced in an untransformed, sequential way, WM is involved in preserving and simultaneously processing the same or other information, (Swanson & Siegel, 2001). Difficulties in an effective use of WM characterize people with LD as well as people with attention disorders. Two tasks which require retaining and processing information in the face of distraction are reading and driving. During reading, the flow of meaning must be maintained and revised while individual words are decoded. Similarly, driving a car involves storing information about the address ahead for a short time while making decisions about things on the road (speed, course, other cars). An ability to use WM effectively predicts success in the academic field (reading, writing, analyzing) – skills which demand remembering and processing material simultaneously (Bayliss, Jarold, Baddeley, & Gunn, 2005).

WM can cause problems not only facing academic skills but also in everyday life. In their everyday life they may experience difficulties remembering a person's address while listening to instructions how to reach the place (McNamara & Wong, 2003; Swanson, Zheng & Jerman, 2009).

However, when students with LD are provided with cues or prompts, they often increase their recall of information relating to objects and events (McNamara & Wong, 2003).

In the field of teaching, the teacher is required, for example, to listen to his pupils and at the same time think how to generalize their ideas. A student-teacher with LD suffering from a WM deficit might have to learn how to cope with such a task.

3. Reading Disabilities – RD

The symptom of severe reading difficulties in children who have at least average intelligence and do not suffer from general learning problems, is called 'dyslexia' or 'specific reading disability' interchangeably (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowing & Scanlon, 2004).

The definition of dyslexia or RD was provided by the 'World Federation of Neurology', in 1968 (Nicolson, 1996; Lyon, 2005) and accepted by experts today as a "disorder in children, who despite of conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing, and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities". The interpretation of this definition relates to a discrepancy between reading ability and intelligence. This definition is parallel to the specific definition of LD which relates to "a severe discrepancy between achievements and intellectual ability, in one or more academic skills..."(Deisinger, 2004).

Dyslexia was redefined operatively as a "specific language based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding" (Nicolson, 1996). Reading ability is examined as to speed and accuracy of word decoding.

Usually deficiency in word decoding reflects "insufficient phonological processing ability" (Nicolson, 1996). The cause for dyslexia was explained then (Nicolson, 1996), as a deficit in phonological processing of sounds and words. Phonological skill means the ability to use language rules to convert written graphemes into spoken phonemes (sound) to gain access to print stimulus. The developmental RD (dyslexia) is unlikely to appear in phonological appearance only (Castles, 2006). Recent research explains RD as impairment in integration of information from phonological, orthographic, semantic, syntactic, and morphological processes (Katzir, Young-Suk, Wolf, Morris, & Lovett, 2008).

RD as part of LD is a developmental disorder of biological origin (Frith & Frith, 1995), is present from birth, and has strong genetic components. A dyslectic child will always be dyslectic, even when he is a highly successful adult (Nicolson, 1996). Difficulties in reading may impact an adult differently than a child (Siegel, 2006). In childhood, RD is expressed in the acquisition of reading skills, but in adolescence, with the achievement of reading abilities, the symptoms of reading impairment change (Siegel, 2006).

Phonological skills carry greater weight at the beginning phase of reading, whereas semantic and syntactic skills carry greater weight in more advanced stages of reading (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling, & Scanlon, 2004; Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila & La Fave, 2008). Adults still usually suffer from a

phonology deficiency which surfaces whenever they try to identify, read or write a new word in a familiar pattern (wrought like drought, nought, thought). They find it hard to generalize word patterns when meeting new words, although they can read common words and develop vocabulary by sight (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowing & Scanlon, 2004).

An adult who obtains compensatory strategies can read, though less efficiently. He might read quite slowly in order to be precise, (disturbs reading fluency), might repeat words to correct himself or even make mistakes and have problems in monitoring reading – all of which interfere with comprehension (Katzir, Kin, Wolf, Morris & Lovett, 2008; Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila & La Fave, 2008).

Comprehension skills in adults (college students and teens) with childhood diagnosis of dyslexia are relatively poor in comparison to other adults. Only about 25% of such adults have no reading comprehension problems. These usually influence academic performance (Hatcher, Snowling & Griffiths, 2002; Ransby & Swanson, 2003).

Apart from phonological processing and comprehension, two rather new criterions for measurement of success in higher education appear in recent studies: the ability to select main ideas and to use test strategies. These two components are less used by college and university students with dyslexia in comparison to peers. On the other hand, students with RD reported greater use of time management and study aids which may be a consequence either of greater word level difficulties or of the focus these strategies get in support centers. Furthermore, university students with RD reported a deeper approach to learning than peers. Such an approach to learning was not so significant with college students (Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila & La Fave, 2008).

4. Writing Impairments

Writing (whether a report, letter, story etc.) is a problem-solving complicated task embracing several domains. A simplistic description of writing refers to it as a production of understandable language reflecting the knowledge of a topic (Hooper, 2002). The writing process involves coordination between mental processes that are performed simultaneously in a recursive manner, going forwards and backwards (Hull & Barhtolomae, 1986; Almargot & Chanquoy, 2001; Graham & Harris & Larsen, 2001; Jesus-Nicasio & Fidalgo, 2008). The writing course involves attention, control, self regulation, an active working memory, as well as the writer's organization skills and motivation (Hooper, 2002).

The proficient writer goes back and forth from a situation of retrieving information from memory to a situation of processing, translating, and transferring it into writing. Then he continues with general planning and proceeds with planning each part. This process requires a broad knowledge of the topic, self-monitoring, and problem-solving skills. The more complicated the task, higher cognitive skills are needed. In higher education the writing tasks become more complicated (Dahan & Melzer, 2008).

Children write in a linear associative manner, imitating speech. A child simply gets his ideas down on paper as they are retrieved from LTM (long term memory), one after another without self-regulation, whereas a skilled writer begins with a general plan and goes on planning each phase. He retrieves the information from memory, processes it and translates it into writing. In order to do so, he has got to have the knowledge relevant to the topic, self evaluation, the ability to rework the written text, and solve various problems related to it (Jesus-Nicasio & Fidalgo, 2008).

The knowledge, approaches, and beliefs of pupils as related to writing play a significant role in the process and the final form of the written product. Research concerning pupils' self-regulation and self-evaluation points out that those with LD do not dedicate time to revise their work, and if at all, only to technical aspects. In comparison, their peers without LD read and correct their work and dedicate significantly more time to evaluate it. Pupils with writing deficiencies have greater difficulties in producing sentence structures, which result in essays that are generally less coherent and organized in comparison to peers without LD. Moreover, pupils with LD spend more time on a writing task, but this includes more interruptions and distractions (Graham, Schwartz & McArthur, 1993; Jesus- Nicasio & Fidalgo, 2008). It stands to reason that adult students develop strategies to strengthen their writing skills, but the problems related to pupils' writing might worry adult students with LD too.

In the field of higher education, as writing tasks become more complex, a student must use thinking procedures of a higher order (analyze, synthesize, conclude, generalize). The development of writing competence is a challenging task for all students and especially for students with LD (Jesus-Nicasio & Fidalgo, 2008).

The significance of writing manifested itself when students with LD were asked as to what kind of support they need. They specifically expressed their need for support in writing or in structuring and organizing written work. They felt that support should be subject centered, flexible and accessible (Hatcher, Snowling & Griffiths, 2002).

Writing proficiency today is also critical in the work place and directly influences hiring and promoting decisions (Hooper, 2002). It is also of high importance for the professional development of a student-teacher while preparing and performing his lessons in class (Huijun & Hamel, 2003).

5. Attention Deficit/ Hyperactive Disorder – ADHD

There is a close connection between LD and ADHD. Although ADHD is not LD per se, their symptoms reveal themselves in learning performance and are very common among students (Weiss & Weiss, 2004; Kessler, Adler, Barkley, Biederman, Conner, Delmar et al., 2006). 70% - 80% of children between the ages 8 - 16 who have ADHD also suffer from LD (Mayes, Calhoun & Crowell 2000; Weiss & Weiss, 2004). Since studies have indicated high co-morbidity for LD and ADHD in children, there is reason to suppose that the same rate would hold for college students (Katz, 2003).

For decades the term ADHD has been used to describe hyperactive little boys, disrupting lessons in school. In 1980, in the 3rd addition of DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of American Psychiatric Association), the symptoms of the disorder were separated into attention deficits and hyperactivity.

In 1994 DSM-4 (the fourth edition the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) clearly identified 3 types of inattention and concentration disorders (Tsal, Mevorach & Shaley, 2005):

1. An Attention Disorder characterized mainly by inattention (ADHD-I, ADD).
2. An Attention Disorder characterized mainly by hyperactive and impulsive behavior (ADHD/HI).
3. A combined Attention Disorder characterized by both attention and hyperactivity and impulsive behavior (ADHD/COM).

In 2013, the definition of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has been updated in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) to more accurately characterizing the experience of adults.

ADHD is characterized by a pattern of behavior, presented in multiple settings (e.g., school and home), that can result in performance in the social, educational, or work settings domains. As in DSM-IV, symptoms were divided

into two groups of criteria of inattention and hyperactivity and impulsivity that include behaviors like failure to pay close attention to details, difficulty organizing tasks and activities, excessive talking, fidgeting, or an inability to remain seated in appropriate situations. The symptoms are called presentations rather than types because a person may have any combination of presentations from both groups of criteria and the group of criteria of the same person may change over the years.

Children must have at least six symptoms from either (or both) the inattention group of criteria and the hyperactivity and impulsivity criteria, while older adolescents and adults (over age 17 years) must present with five. While the criteria have not changed from DSM-IV, examples have been included to illustrate the types of behaviour children, older adolescents, and adults with ADHD might exhibit. The descriptions will help clinicians better identify typical ADHD symptoms at each stage of patients' lives.

Using DSM-5, several of the individual's ADHD symptoms must be present prior to age 12 years, compared to 7 years as the age of onset in DSM-IV. This change is supported by substantial research published since 1994 that found no clinical differences between children identified by 7 years versus later in terms of course, severity, outcome, or treatment response.

Problems of Attention Disorders in children continue to appear all through life, and like LD express themselves in various fields (Barkley, Edwards, Laneri, Fletcher, & Metevia, 2001; Brown, 2006, 2007): ability to inhibit response, organize academic work, schedule, monitor emotions, sustain efforts and be capable of self regulation.

Findings show that children and adults have different combinations of attention and hyperactive disorders. The most common is the lack of sustaining attention. More than half of the participants in those studies are characterized by the inability to focus, to transfer attention from one assignment to another, or to use affectively the working memory (Mirsky, Pascualvaca, Duncan & French, 1999; Tsal & Shalev & mevorach, 2005).

Several studies argue that the point is not really the lack of attention, but the ineffective use or allocation of existing attention resources (Stefani, 2004; Cutting & Deneckla, 2006). For example, a student suffering from a lack of sustained attention may pay attention at the beginning of a test, then be distracted for some time, go back to his test...Therefore a changing allocation of attention resources will result in the imbalance between different parts of the same test. In the same way, a student-teacher with ADHD might be distracted or be less attentive during his teaching in class.

The ADHD/ADD symptoms have a growing influence on learning achievements, especially when the assignments become more complex, in college or university. These developmental attention disorders begin in childhood with basic components, like forgetfulness, absentmindedness, deficiency in working memory, and response inhibition, and continue in adolescence with more complex elements, like difficulties getting organized, planning, self regulating or appraising social situations (Stefani, 2004; Cutting & Deneckla, 2006).

DSM-5 takes into account that ADHD persists into adulthood; adult ADHD has only recently become a focus of widespread clinical examinations. 1% - 6% of the total population suffered from ADHD in childhood. Approximately 50% of those diagnosed in childhood as having ADHD suffer from its symptoms in adulthood, (Weiss & Weiss, 2004; Kessler, Adler, Barkley, Biederman, Conner, Delmar et al., 2006). The reason that only 50% of the adults who had ADHD in childhood are diagnosed as having those disorders is probably because many of them do not study and therefore don't apply for a diagnosis.

Adults have the same core syndrome as children and therefore, like children can be forgetful and less organized. However, as demands for planning ahead increase over the years, these disorders become increasingly prominent. Adults tend to be less obviously hyperactive than young children, but a variation of these symptoms can manifest itself in some situations, like difficulties in sitting through meetings, waiting in line, also driving speedily, talking too much etc. With age and wisdom adults build some coping strategies and are more likely to seek treatment (Weiss & Weiss, 2004). For example, a student in an institute of higher education suffering from attention disorders might have difficulties in activating himself to learn, and in organizing his daily schedule and assignments according to an efficient priority. A student-teacher might have difficulties planning his lesson, managing it according to schedule, and focusing while ignoring all kinds of diversions. Another student-teacher might have problems retrieving material from his memory (while teaching), or problems accepting criticism because of insufficient emotional self regulation.

6. Psychological and Behavioral Difficulties

The pains, disappointments, and frustrations that students with LD or ADHD experience may cause secondary psychological and behavioral-social difficulties. These problems may harm their self-image, produce antagonism and helplessness, lower their self-esteem and bring about social isolation (Vogel & Adelman, 1992; Goldberg, Higgins, Raskind & Herman, 2003; Zeleke, 2004;

Elbaum & Vaughm, 2006; Burden, 2008). Difficulties of students with LD also influence other domains of their lives, like employment prospects, relations with others, and people in their near environment.

In her studies though the years 2004, 2006, 2009, and 2011 Ainat interviewed students with LD, and investigated their psychological, behavioral, and social problems. Her findings indicate that students with LD are afraid that family, friends and even they themselves will be disappointed with their low achievements in the academic field. Therefore they react in three parallel and sometimes integrated ways: the behavioral, psychological, and cognitive route, each of them separating into three: the positive, negative, and preventive way.

In the behavioral negative direction, several researches point to aggression, impudence, dishonesty and the like; also students with LD may use a defensive way of ignoring problems or developing dependence on others. They may 'forget' assignments, withdraw into themselves, and refrain from participating anyone in their problems. In contrast, other students with LD develop positive techniques of behavior. They offer teachers and peers assistance whenever they can contribute, and seek for help when they need it.

In the psychological direction, these students develop negative, inefficient strategies such as a 'survival trap', which they don't even try to escape: denial - linked with a great anxiety in the face of the threatening truth of their learning disabilities; projection - the 'blame' is passed over to someone else by rational excuses; diversion – a shift from the focus of the problem to an another, unreal one. It seems that some students with LD tend to admit a mental problem more easily than their LD problems.

In contrast, positive psychological strategies relate to students self-efficacy, the inner feeling of ability, and the awareness that they have the potential to succeed.

In the positive-cognitive direction, students with LD struggle stubbornly and continuously with difficulties in reading, comprehension, and also with attention and concentration disorders. The positively oriented students are ready to ask for help writing their assignments and preparing for exams. In spite of suffering, rebellion, and despair, the attempt to stick to academic requirements and cope persistently with all obstacles is noticeable (Ainat , 2004).

7. Factors Contributing to Success – Self-Determination Skills

Legislators and the general community have often contended that people with LD cannot be successful teachers. This issue has been debated in many countries including England, Canada and U.S.A., and Israel (Vogel & Sharoni, 2011). A few studies with small samples of teachers with LD related to this issue and also to the advantages and disadvantages of authorizing student-teachers with LD to become teachers. Some of these studies indicated that LD have their impact on the way these teachers perceive themselves professionally. The primary motivation for entering the teaching profession was the desire to provide pupils with the positive experiences they themselves didn't have as young pupils in their schools. They had the ethos of caring and creating a supportive climate and viewed their own LD as a tool for reaching their pupils. The teachers emphasized their sensitivity, empathy, and their ability to help children, especially those with LD. They felt they gave them an advantage over their colleagues who did not experience such difficulties. They saw their role as developing personal autonomy and teaching pupils to employ a variety of strategies (Duquette, 2000; Ferri, Keefe & Gregg, 2001; Reddick, 2003; Vogel & Sharoni, 2011). From these studies one can assume that teachers with LD developed these attributes as part of their life experience and that these qualities paved their way to success. Although students with LD have their deficiencies, many of those who study in higher education succeed both in the academic field and later on at work.

Studies investigated the factors (beyond academic achievement) contributing to successful life of adults with LD. One of the very first studies was composed of 71 highly and moderately successful adults with LD – nominations were selected from a number of organizations on the basis of their vocational success. Using ethnographic interviews, it was found that the key to their success was control through the pursuit of two sets of themes: internal decisions which involve: desire, goal orientation and reframing their LD; and external manifestations which translate the internal decisions into actual behaviors: persistence, goodness to fit (fitting themselves into the most appropriate environment), learning creative strategies, and social ecologies (creating a supportive network)(Gerber, Ginsberg, and Reiff, 1992; Rieff, Ginsberg, and Gerber, 1995). As already been discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, empowerment is defined by gaining relative control over one's life. Therefore, these internal decisions and external manifestations called in later studies self-determination skills characterize successful adults and students with LD, and are part of these adults' empowerment.

A relevant study (for our purpose) dealt with adult individuals, who had been diagnosed as children with LD. They were divided into two groups –'successful' and 'unsuccessful' - on the basis of a success-index which included eight independent variables: employment, education, independence, family relations, social relationships, crime/substance abuse, life satisfaction, and psychological health. A quantitative analysis revealed insignificant differences between the two groups, based on the dependent variables of background, IQ, or academic achievements. It appeared that success might be related to other factors in the lives of these individuals. A qualitative analysis of those two groups came up with 'success attributes' that differentiated the groups. The successful group demonstrated greater self-awareness and acceptance of their LD, pro-activity, perseverance, emotional stability, appropriate goal setting, and use of social support systems. In yet another later in-depth detailed study with the same participants, these 'success attributes' proved again to differentiate between the two groups clearly. The individuals of the successful group demonstrated self-awareness and ability to acknowledge their strengths as well as their weaknesses; they were involved financially as well as socially, often in a leadership role. They set realistic goals and ways to accomplish them, but still sought help when needed (Goldberg, Higgins, Raskind & Herman, 2003).

These attributes which embrace an independent, autonomous personality are also referred to as self-determination features which include: problem-solving skills, learning about oneself (self-awareness, learning about the disabilities and abilities), goal-setting (both short-term and long-term), self-management and initiative (Hall, Spruill & Webster, 2002; Reiff, 2004; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Hall & Webster, 2008; Madaus, Gerber & Price, 2008). It appears that if college students with LD possess self-determination skills, they persist in college and are achieving at the level commensurate with their non-LD peers (Trainin & Swanson, 2005; Hall & Webster, 2008; Denny & Daviso, 2012). This is also true for students with ADHD (Parker & Boutelle, 2009).

In order to possess self-determination skills, one needs to have a strong self-concept. Positive self-concept is an important attribute for success, especially for students with LD. LD affect all domains of life and are frequently linked with poor self-concept. The term self-concept is especially relevant to students with LD (all ages), and is considered multidimensional. This term can be divided into three dimensions: general self-concept, academic self-concept, and social self-concept (Zelege, 2004; Elbaum & Vaughm, 2006; Burden, 2008).

Findings of the last ten years concerning the relation between low general self-concept (Hall & Webster, 2008) and LD are not clear and sometimes contradictory (Elbaum & Vaughm, 2006). Most studies point out that there is no

difference in the general self-concept of students with LD in comparison to other students. For this reason, it is assumed that there are probably additional factors (beyond academic achievements) that influence general self-concept (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2006; Zeleke, 2004; Burden, 2008).

Pupils and adult students with LD have a lower academic self-concept than their peers, due to their academic difficulties and their comparatively low achievements. Still, they can perceive themselves more positively in other fields, like sports or music (Chapman, 1988; Zeleke, 2004; Elbaum, 2006; Burden, 2008). A student who is successful in non-academic fields or is surrounded by friends can develop both a positive general self-concept and a social self-concept and suffer less from emotional problems which sometimes accompany LD (Elbaum, 2006; Mann, 2006). Moreover, a student's academic self-concept can change for the better along with the support and help he gets and with the improvement of his achievements (Burden, 2008).

A positive general self-concept and social self-concept may contribute to successful academic and social integration in college, and help to explain the persistence of college students with LD. Academic integration secures a student's satisfaction with the academic system, assures his relationship with faculty and peers on campus. Social integration is defined as the interaction between the individual and the social systems of the institution, including peer groups, faculty, and extra curriculum activities (DaDeppo, 2009).

LD might affect perceptions college students with LD hold about themselves, as part of their general self-concept and their self-determination. As a result, students develop a set of reactions to precollege and college life experiences, based on the way each of them perceives his or her LD. The self-styled approach to the LD of each student is described as comprising of four main properties: Definition of LD, orientation of LD, condition of LD, and impact of LD – all according to the student's own perception (Troiano, 2003).

(1) Definition of LD varies among students with LD from a general vague perception of their LD to a more personal, clear definition of their problems (Troiano, 2003). This vague awareness of the LD phenomenon is intensified as a result of misconceptions of these students and their peers (Denhart, 2008; May & Stone, 2010). Some college students with and without disabilities categories students with LD as having low intelligence, being lazy and being expected to achieve less (May & Stone, 2010). Themes that relate to these misconceptions worry students with LD in higher education: being misunderstood and perceived (by themselves and by others) as intellectually inferior, incompetent, lazy, attempting to cheat or use unfair advantages (Denhart, 2008).

(2) Orientation of their LD varies from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control (the disability exists outside or inside the student) (Troiano, 2003). Although many studies which investigate school-aged children show positive correlation between internal locus of control and social and emotional adjustment, a study concerning college students with and without LD shows positive correlation between external locus of control and social and personal-emotional adjustment of both groups. This may be explained by the different social context in college which is quite different than school context. Maybe external locus of control serves as a survival tool for the new demanding environment in college (Estrada, Dupoux, & Wolman, 2006).

(3) Condition of their LD varies among students with LD from giving-in to coping successfully (Troiano, 2003).

(4) Impact of their LD is felt by some as influencing all life domains, while others see it as influencing limited aspects of their life (Troiano, 2003).

Positive reactions of self-styled approach to LD as part of self-determination (awareness of LD, external locus of control, coping, and feeling LD has a limited influence), lead to success, while negative reactions may prevent success.

Findings of some studies point out that not only students but staff members also label LD with the connotation of stupidity or low intelligence (Denhart, 2008; May & Stone, 2010). Staff's perceptions are so important because they have an immense impact on students' self-determination and success. In some cases, although faculty members have some knowledge of LD, positive performance expectations for students with LD (can compete at university level), and willingness to personally support these students, they are ready to provide only minor accommodations. This can be viewed positively, as a reluctance to reduce overall program quality. On the important issue of LD 'disclosure', faculty members admit they are not handling this problem and do not invite students to disclose their LD. The reason for almost ignoring LD by staff is their insufficient knowledge to make the right decisions as regards to teaching and exam accommodations. Staff suggests that additional information would help them make the appropriate decisions for the students' support and success. Many students with LD share experiences of not self-disclosing (their LD), and therefore not advocating for services. Only after failing they choose to disclose their disability and request support (Reiff, 2004; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Hall & Webster, 2008; Denhart, 2008; Murray, Wren, keys, 2008). As to additional knowledge and information related to LD, university staff who participated in any form of prior training, whether courses, workshops, reading articles, or visiting websites, have greater general knowledge, and greater sensitivity as to

these students than staff who received no training at all (Murray, Lombard & Wren, 2011).

In order to empower students with LD to become independent, successful learners and gain some control over their life, they should be taught to acknowledge their LD, advocate for their needs, and disclose their disability to relevant staff and friends. They should also be provided with strategies and tools to overcome obstacles and succeed in the field of teaching. Success would help them build a strong professional image.

As part of this effort of Empowerment, staff members in college should expand their knowledge not only about LD but also about the effective methods to enhance their students' self-determination and teaching strategies to complete their studies successfully (Getzel & Thoma, 2008). Since Empowerment deals with individual self determination traits on one hand and community culture and organizational structure on the other hand, the question is how these factors influence students with LD in the field of practicum.

Part C: Student-Teachers in Practicum

As already mentioned, empowerment of pre-service teachers in practicum is about gaining control over teaching situations. In other words, student-teachers should be able to make their own decisions about the lesson plan, the pupils, the class management etc. Therefore, the goal of practicum is to enhance professional development of student-teachers. The development of these students relies to a great extent on their ability to effectively frame teaching situations by the cognitive process of reflection. This important cognitive process is explained in this chapter. It concerns all student-teachers, but are slower and challenging to achieve by most student-teachers with LD. There is actually no research on student-teachers with LD in practicum. The literature in the field of practicum relates to all student-teachers in higher education and doesn't focus specifically on student-teachers with LD. Therefore, when relevant, comments regarding students with LD are added.

Appropriate framing relates on the student's internal inputs, their reactions to the school structures. I'll start by explaining an important internal input –personal beliefs. The changing of prior beliefs and adapting them to those presented in the teacher education program are most important for all student-teachers' development.

1. Student-Teachers' Education - Three Arenas of Professional Development

Student-teachers' learning takes place in a dual context of a higher education institution and school (where they practice teaching).

It includes three arenas which mutually influence each other (Kagan, 1992; Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992; Fairbanks & Meritt, 1998; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004):

- the pre-training arena, which relates to students' previous conceptions, positions and beliefs. This arena is crucial for teacher- trainers and therefore for this dissertation, because students without and with LD do not enter college tabula rasa.

- the teacher education program and curriculum, which is not discussed in the current study and maybe a subject for another research.

- the third arena, the field of experience or practicum, is perceived as the heart of professional training, and provides the most important context for

developing the skills of a teacher (Cope, Inglis & Stronach, 1997; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004).

2. The Pre-Training Arena – Beliefs (Internal Inputs)

This arena includes the prior beliefs and conceptions of student-teachers upon entering the educational program and as will be explained, relevant implicitly for student-teachers with LD. These beliefs have a strong impact on the student-teacher's learning and experiences in practicum, even though not considered directly part of the training program. It is important to relate to those beliefs, since the student-teachers professional development is based on the change of primer beliefs in order to adapt to curriculum and teaching situations. The student's pre-training ideas, beliefs and images of teachers have been developed long before entering the teacher education program, and accompany him/her all the way through the pre-service period. Experiences in classrooms, relationships with teachers and other authority figures, memories about teaching and learning as well as current experiences are multi-dimensional with positive and negative emotions attached to them (Bookhart & Freeman, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Fairbanks & Merrit, 1998; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Atkinson, 2004; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Raffo & Hall, 2006; Karavas & Drossou, 2009; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009; Dunn & Rakes, 2011; Seker, 2011). Many student-teachers with LD have negative memories related to their school experience (as explained in part B). These memories accompany them and influence their practicum.

The process of changing former beliefs is rather difficult, although it is the core of development. Many times student-teachers use the information provided in coursework and fieldwork to confirm rather than confront and change their former beliefs. It follows that their beliefs of classroom and pupils, and their identity as teachers determine how they interpret the knowledge and experience presented to them in the pre-service program (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Fairbanks & Merrit, 1998; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Atkinson, 2004; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Raffo & Hall, 2006; Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009; Karavas & Drossou, 2009; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009; Dunn & Rakes, 2011; Seker, 2011).

In a review of forty studies presented between 1987 and 1991, with novices and beginning teachers, most findings indicate that neither the content of the course (in higher education) nor field work effect student-teacher's prior beliefs, which usually remain inflexible. In the same review only a few studies, present

the opposite findings which infer that a change in the novices' initial beliefs may indeed occur during practice (Kagan, 1992).

Recent studies indicate that change of beliefs is an intricate issue, for there are some perceptions that are given to change while others seem more fixed. More important, there are different factors that influence this process of change such as self efficacy, which relate to the student-teacher himself or factors which relate to others in his surroundings like his mentors' beliefs and support as well as expanding the content knowledge by taking classes related to the subject matter.

Some of these recent studies investigated the adaptation and implementation of new beliefs and methods as a result of teacher-training programs and field experience (practicum). They indicate that previous beliefs can indeed be changed under certain circumstances.

For as long as twenty years and more, there is an ongoing debate among educators from kindergarten, through elementary school to high school, whether at all levels pupils should learn all subjects by trial and error, ask questions and inquire rather than be led to the answers. The studies presented shortly relate to the question whether the teachers' course succeeded in changing the student-teachers beliefs towards novelties and learner-centered teaching as opposed to the traditional teaching, where the teacher is in the center of instruction.

The first study presents a question whether student-teachers' efficacy (confidence as teachers) and concerns (interest and feelings towards innovation and change) are predictors of student-teachers' tendency to change their beliefs. According to the findings most students were unconcerned or only mildly interested in the learner-centered practice. Efficacy and concerns taken together explained change in learning centered beliefs, more so than each of these variants separately. Still, self-efficacy was positively related with learner-centered beliefs, while low levels of concerns (those mildly interested in the learner-centered practice) shared inverse relationships with learner-centered beliefs. By better understanding of students' beliefs and improving their knowledge as to the innovation, teacher educators may move their students towards more learner-centered beliefs (Dunn & Rakes, 2011).

A different study relating to learner-centered teaching, investigated student-teachers and mentors beliefs as to English language teaching. The study aimed at three research questions: What are the student-teachers' beliefs of language teaching and learning after completing their teaching practice? What are the mentors' beliefs of language teaching and learning? How compatible are these two sets of beliefs and how do they relate to the education program? Results

show congruence of opinion between student-teachers and mentors on almost all aspects even when they are contrary to the ideas promoted in the education course.

The student-teachers and mentors strongly believed in the importance of grammar and vocabulary instructions (teacher-centered belief), despite a different attitude (pupil-centered) of the curriculum presented in the university, emphasizing the importance of promoting learner autonomy by trial and error. If novice teachers are to adapt new ways of teaching and change their beliefs, they should be placed with mentors who are already reformers in their schools and classes (Karavas & Drossou, 2009).

While discussing changes in beliefs of student-teachers, it is interesting to look into the issue from another viewpoint, that of agency beliefs and their changeability (in two studies). Teachers' agency beliefs mean that outcomes (like pupils' success) are the result of student-teachers' own actions and therefore are also part of their self-efficacy. Agency beliefs are connected to past success or failure and seem to lead to job satisfaction, high commitment, and protection against burnout.

One of the researches aims at investigating changes (increase) in agency beliefs during one year of postgraduate certificate and experience in practicum. It also explores how agency beliefs relate to observed teacher-pupil interaction in class and day-to-day experience as reported in students' dairies. Teachers' agency beliefs converged around domains of support (teachers' involvement and interpersonal relationships with pupils) and instruction (ways in which teachers organize and structure the teaching-learning environment). Supportive agency beliefs were usually high and in most cases stable across time. In contrast, instructional agency beliefs increased over time, starting lower than supportive agency beliefs and increasing constantly across time. Those who started off with a lower instructional agency improved more over time than those who started off higher, suggesting that teacher education is successful in creating a learning context in which student-teachers instructional agency beliefs increase, and the supportive agency beliefs be maintained during the training course. Observed emotional support and pupil engagement in the classroom predicted higher level of instructional agency beliefs. Thus, student-teachers overall agency's belief showed reciprocal connections between the instructional self efficacy and supportive variants (Malmberg & Hagger, 2009). Although this study does not relate to the change of beliefs towards teaching-approach (learner-centered as appose to teacher-centered), it discusses the change in teachers' beliefs relating to self-efficacy which is not less important and positively linked to the teacher education program and experience in school.

Yet another study examined the effects of extensive inquiry-based (learner-centered) field experience on elementary Science student-teachers' personal agency beliefs, composed of context beliefs (favorable environment) and capability beliefs (self efficacy) related to teaching Science. The experimental group utilized the relatively novel inquiry (learner-centered) method while the control group used the traditional teaching (teacher-centered) method. The context (supportive surroundings) beliefs of both groups showed no significant change as a result of the experience. The lack of increase in context beliefs scores could be attributed to the lack of support for inquiry on the part of the mentors. However, the control group's capability scores lower than those of the experimental group to start with, declined significantly; the experimental group's capability beliefs scores remained unchanged.

Although there was no significant difference between the experimental and the control group as to science teaching capability beliefs prior to the experience, the utilization of the inquiry method during science teaching did enhance pre-service teachers' to maintain their capability beliefs. A significant relationship was found between the number of science courses taken at the college level and the pre-service teachers' capability beliefs following the experience. There was a spiral relationship among the ability to establish effective communicative relationships with pupils, the desire for personal growth and improvement, and greater content knowledge. This means that content knowledge and experience are likely to establish effective communicative relationships with pupils. They also desire personal growth and improvement and if having supportive mentors, may enhance the utilization of the rather new inquiry method (Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009).

Student-teachers with LD's professional development also depends on the change of primer beliefs in order to adapt to curriculum and teaching situations. As explained, pre-training ideas, beliefs and images of teachers have been developed long before entering the teacher education program, and accompany him/her all the way through the pre-service period. Memories of frustration and humiliation in classroom, effect student-teachers with LDs' teaching and learning as well as current experiences in college. Many student teachers with LD remember their negative feelings from their own experience as pupils in school (Duquett, 2000; Ferri, Keefe & Gregg, 2001; Reddick, 2003; Vogel & Sharoni, 2011). Students in general and student-teachers with LD frequently suffer from the lack of self-efficacy (Hall & Webster, 2008; Vogel & Sharoni, 2011) and will concentrate on survival at the beginning. They have to build their self-confidence as teachers in order to be able to absorb and implement new ways of teaching, ways to approach their pupils.

3. 'Teaching-Self', and 'Teaching-Repertoire' – as Part of Self-Determination Skills and Personality Traits (Internal Inputs)

As explained above self- efficacy and concerns influence the student-teachers ability to change beliefs. Self-efficacy and levels of concerns (worries, as explained above), are part of important inputs which relate to student-teachers' personality traits (social skills, professional knowledge, adjustment, ability to learn) as well as self-determination skills (independence, self-regulation). The internal inputs – personality traits, self-determination skills, and personal beliefs form the student-teacher's teaching-self.

Teaching-self is the way the teacher perceives himself at a moment or situation of teaching (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004). Upon entering the teacher's education program, student-teachers initial teaching-self is influenced by prior experiences, their traits and self-determination skills. Their identity as teachers goes through changes shaped by the challenge and support they get in school (in practicum). A real passion for learning and teaching, and close relationships with models like teachers and mentors are leading to the formation of a strong teaching-self. Well developed, coherent, fit-to-situation conception of self-as-a-teacher enables the student-teacher to build a richer, fuller, more powerful and productive teacher (Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004).

Student-teachers with LD might begin their practice with a weak teaching-self as a result of low self-confidence because of their school history. They also confront their learning problems as teachers for the first time. The teaching-self also depends on one's teaching knowledge and repertoire, his performance as a teacher.

Teaching Repertoire is the accumulation of teachers' knowledge, which serves as the basis for teaching, and on which the student-teacher frames the teaching situations. It includes examples, images, understandings, and actions (Schon, 1983; Tang, 2004).

Those meta-cognitive processes and concepts – a strong teaching-self, appropriate framing, a rich teaching repertoire - are needed to enhance the student-teachers' development, but they are not enough to ensure change. The teaching self, whether strong or weak, relies a great deal on the student-teacher's personality traits (pleasant or aggressive) and self –determination skills (the ability to make your own decisions) (Kagan, 1992; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Karavas & Drossou, 2009; Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009).

The traits and self-determination skills of student-teachers with LD are influenced by their school history and background –as will be presented as part of this dissertation.

These internal inputs - traits, self-determination skills, and beliefs rely significantly on external inputs - school structures and others in the student-teachers' surroundings, like mentors' and tutors' and on a supporting school setting and environment.

4. Practicum – Student-Teachers' Placement (External Inputs)

Fieldwork or practicum takes place in school where the pragmatics of teaching consists of three facets: the action context, the socio-professional context, and the supervisory context:

- The action context plays one of the most significant roles in the student-teachers' development. It is from this teaching activity, student- teachers derive the validation of their professional ability or the feeling of being unskilled. Student-teachers observe their mentors (cooperating teacher) in class, where they themselves practice teaching. Thus, the action context is the actual setting or school where the practicum takes place. It follows, that school placement is important to trainee teachers for their personal and professional development (Fairbanks & Meritt, 1998; Tang, 2002, 2003; 2004; Raffo & hall, 2006).

Depending on his/her placement, the same trainee may feel comfortable and sense a strong self-efficacy in one school, while feeling weak and worthless when placed in another educational setting. Moreover, different student-teachers may vary in the sense of self-efficacy they experience within the same setting, class, and with the same mentor at the same period of time. Some students need a more supportive and affectionate environment than others in order to create a strong self-efficacy. The degree of modification to school setting is different with every student, and an important process for the securing of a professional stable sense of selves as teachers (Slick, 1997, 1998; Bandura, 1997, 1999; Fairbanks & Meritt, 1998; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Raffo & Hall, 2006). The placement, or the choice of school setting, relies on tutors' judgment.

- The socio-professional context is the way the student-teacher establishes his relationship with practitioners and peers in the teaching community, as well

as the setting in which he is exposed to everyday interactions in school. It includes the staff in the educational system, the principal and the supervisor, the parents and community in which the school is situated. The socialization of student-teachers is an important facet in their professional development. Students may go through periods of isolation, detachment, affiliation or engagement across various mentors, schools and teaching periods, which have different effects on the construction of their identity as teachers and their productive or unproductive learning experiences (Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004).

- Isolation is the case of unproductive learning in an isolated socio-professional context. In this condition the student-teacher develops a poor relationship with only one group of people in school, which results in bad feelings and less effective learning.

- Detachment is explained as a situation where the student-teachers just "borrow" classrooms for practice; no one in school coaches them or involves them in school life.

- Affiliation within socio-professional context means quite frequent contact with one or two groups of people in school (regular teachers and other fellow student-teachers). This provides a safe, encouraging milieu for productive learning.

- Engagement relates to an involvement in wider circles of school life - principal, teachers, pupils, other practitioners, and parents. It has positive effects on the development of student-teachers and facilitates their access to many aspects of practical knowledge.

- The supervisory context is the third aspect, in which college tutors together with school mentors help bridging theoretical and practical forms of knowledge (Slick, 1997, 1998; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004). The tutors and mentors play a major role in the development and empowerment of the student-teachers, which is the theme of this dissertation. An important task is to encourage the students with LD's progress by promoting their reflection on teaching situations. The quality of feedback student-teachers receive in the feedback sessions with their supervisors is important for their professional progress.

In conclusion, external inputs of empowerment of the student-teachers include the student-teachers' placement. But other inputs, as part of the practicum arena, include the supervisors' (mentor and tutor) feedback as part of their role and their relationships with the student-teacher. In these contexts, the supervisors' personality patterns and quality of feedback will be explained and stressed to emphasize the supervisors' professional support that may empower the student-teacher.

5. Mentors' and Tutors' Quality of Feedback (External Inputs)

The supervisors' perception of their role influences the type and quality of feedback they give their student-teachers, supportive or less reassuring. Generally mentors' perception of their role and responsibilities is different from the one established in professional literature. There is a gap between mentors' views of their role and the established views as expressed in research and as part of the university's expectation. Contrary to the perception of most mentors, research literature suggests a mentor should coach the student-teacher to observe and reflect on lessons and events, to ask questions and to engage in a dialogue with him (Hall & Draper & Smith & Bullough, 2008). Research literature also views knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, and books as included in mentors' role, but most students and mentors do not perceive it as crucial (Hayes, 2001; Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2001; Rajuan, Beijaard & Verpool, 2007; Ihmeideh, Al-Basheer & Qablan, 2008).

Student-teachers' perception of mentors' role is very important, because it points out their own needs. The awareness and understanding of their needs is most significant for their professional development and change. Although most mentors see their main role as supportive, pre-service student-teachers do not always agree. Students often perceive their mentor as tough, holding back their try-outs to innovate, giving them too much work to do - and as a consequence generating anxiety in them. In contrast to mentors' report of students' feelings of relaxation many student-teachers feel a high degree of tension and less empathy (Fairbanks, & Merit, 1998; Beck & Kosnic, 2000).

Numerous ways of classifying mentors' role in student-teachers education are described in professional literature. Most of them organize the information according to practical-professional, personal-emotional, and reflective-critical approaches, with different titles and sub-titles.

- In regards to the practical-professional approach, student-teachers refer to their mentors as information sources for teaching. One of the mentor's important roles is to provide students with opportunities to observe their skills and techniques of teaching, and be aware of different teaching approaches. They expect mentors to make suggestions to improve their performance by tips and advice. They view their mentor as a craftsman handling the classroom techniques, and as an apprenticeship model.

The opportunity to teach is also expected by student-teachers. A minority of students prefers to take a subordinate role all through practicum; most of them would like to break free gradually and have the opportunity to teach class (with the mentor's support). Most mentors are happy to let students teach, though some of them are reluctant to release their control. (Hayes, 2001).

Mentors' responsibilities, according to students, also include organizing the time schedule to observe the student in class and discuss his teaching.

- The personal-emotional approach emphasizes personal support, and understanding problems student-teachers face, but is only moderately significant in the mentors' role perceptions. Student-teachers express a greater need for support, positive feedback sessions, and personal relationships than their mentors. They wish to build self-confidence enough to be able to experiment in class, take risks, and implement their ideas (Zanting & Verloop & Vermunt, 2001). Specifically, students refer to the aspects of coaching, supporting, establishing a good relationship. Students emphasize these aspects as important for their learning-to-teach (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Rajuan, Beijjaard & Verpool, 2007). Another personal-emotional aspect student-teachers mention as influential is the welcome into the 'community of practice' in school. A warm reception is critical in shaping student-teachers' feelings of self-confidence and their involvement in school life. Mentors are responsible in many ways to the extent in which student-teachers are absorbed into the 'community of practice' (Hayes, 2001).

The highest agreement between students and mentors is on the practical and technical orientations. Mentors see their roles as sharing information about pupils, teaching, and classroom context. They also see themselves as role models, examples and instructors of class management (Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2001). Regarding both the practical-professional and personal-emotional aspects of students-mentors relationship, an interesting picture is depicted when looking at three stages of practice: at the first stage, during the early days of training, results show that the mentor's role of organizer, role model, and provider of professional development took a major place in the mentor's work. During those days, the personal level, the social relationships between mentors and student-teachers are still superficial, and the communication between them is limited to answering students' requests concerning academic issues. At the second stage, the orientations of trainer, observer and provider of feedback are added to organizer and model. Then, the personal dimension is added – a guide, supporter, communicator, and counsellor. Communication and good relationship between mentor and student become enhanced and improved (Ihmeideh, Al-Basheer & Qablan, 2008).

- The reflective-critical approach as part of the mentor's role, is a most important cognitive process which contributes to student-teachers' professional development. It should be part of the feedback sessions (Schon, 1987; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Atkinson, 2004; Raffo & Hall, 2006; Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough, 2008; Ihmeideh, Al-Basheer & Qablan, 2008). Still, a surprising finding is that reflection is not a priority for either mentors or student-teachers in most studies (Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2001; Rajuan, Beijgaard & Verpool, 2007).

The student's position in the mentor's class depends not only on the mentor. Some students feel responsibility for their own self-regulation of learning-to-teach, taking their own initiative and finding their own styles of teaching. These students expect more of themselves and less of their mentors. They feel they should take an active part in establishing and maintaining a good relationship with their mentors and pupils. They emphasize the importance of being open-minded and receptive to new ideas introduced by mentors, as well as to alternative ways of teaching (Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2001, 2003; Hayes, 2001). These kinds of initiative students are most appreciated by their mentors who are usually willing to give them more autonomy.

Some aspects of tutors' role are exposed due to lesson observation notes given by tutors in feedback sessions to their trainees. The nature of comments fall into four functional categories: descriptive, questioning, evaluative, and advisory. The distribution of comments varies and shows different role perceptions of various tutors as to the levels of reflection they should reach with their student-teachers (Buton, Simpson, & Lopez-Real, 2002).

Student-teachers' perceptions of tutors' role in the beginning of practicum are based on structural and organizational aspects such as aid and support, but at the end of practicum they shift their concern to personal traits like professional feedback and emotional support (Caires & Almeida, 2007).

The power mentors and tutors have over student-teachers is a delicate point in their relationships because of inequality of power allocation between them (Anderson, 2007; Youens & McCarthy, 2007). Mentors cause their students to modify their behavior in school. Student-teachers believe they alter their behavior during their practicum for several reasons: in some cases the reason is mentors' ability to issue negative assessments as well as positive ones. Moreover, student-teachers are reluctant to ask tutors and mentors for subject knowledge, because they are aware of their assessment roles (Youens & McCarthy, 2007). In other cases student-teachers think mentors have legitimate power and authority, and therefore students see them as their bosses and believe

they are supposed to respect the established policies and procedures. Accordingly, student-teachers do not feel they have the right to make changes in the classroom, and many times assimilate into their mentors' procedures, avoiding confrontation. Apart from mentors' assessment task and their superior position, most student-teachers change their behaviour out of respect for their mentors as experts and because they wish to learn from them (Anderson, 2007).

For all these reasons, mentors and tutors have a tremendous power to shape student-teachers' development, although they are not fully aware of their power as experts. The role of power by their support and quality of feedback is a persistent element of mentor/student-teacher partnership. Therefore, teacher education programs should provide mentors and tutors with appropriate training aimed at balancing between exertion of pressure and the extending of support (Anderson, 2007; Youens & McCarthy, 2007). This 'hidden' pressure may put off student-teachers' empowerment.

The relationships between the triad –the mentor, tutor, and student-teacher – has strong impact on the feedback the student-teacher is provided with.

Generally relating to school mentors and university tutors, students claim tutors tend to sharpen their instructional skills in school, while the process of integrating into school culture is usually left to the mentor. Still the ease in which student-teachers become part of the "community of practice" depends also on their ability to recognize and accept the school's priorities (Hayes, 2001; Tsui, A.B., Lopez-Real, F., Law, Y.K., Tang, R., & Shum, M.S.K., 2001).

The relationship between mentor, tutor, and student-teacher is very significant for the empowering of the student, on his way to become a teacher. Each one of that triad has his own perception of his role and the role of the two others in accompanying the student through practicum. Tutors, mentors, and their students have all different personalities, beliefs, and values, woven into a complicated net which affects the student-teacher (Fairbanks & Meritt, 1998).

The different histories and personalities of tutors, mentors, and students impact the way they deal with tensions between them. Some tutors have been formerly school teachers and mentors, and therefore feel committed to support the mentor. They are conscious of their delicate position as tutors in the mentor's territory, watching, taking notes, and commenting.

Serious disagreement between the tutor and the mentor as to the feedback and evaluation of the student may affect the student's progress negatively and tempt him/her to a manipulative behaviour. The tutors' efforts to establish a trusty relationship with the mentor or vice versa should not be at the expense of their task as tutors and mentors, and their responsibility to the student's development.

Even when there is no difference of opinions, there might still be almost no communication between tutor and mentor. Sometimes a mentor does not want to work in collaboration with the university tutor and wants "to be left alone". It is to no avail to give the tutor a general advice in such cases. The tutor seems to be some kind of a threat to the mentor in the intimacy of his/her class. One strategy could be to break the ice by trying to be more useful and less inspecting, and certainly not force his/her ideas, and not judge the mentor (Slick,1997; Slick, 1998). There is no general solution to these problems; it all depends on the mentor's and tutor's personalities.

Some difficulties seem to come from the student side of the triad. Something goes wrong in the dialogues between student-teacher and his/her tutor. Instead of learning, the student feels trapped in a 'win or lose' situation. In this circumstance, the student sees his tutor's expertise as derived from authority not from a real, practical base. A student who distrusts his/her tutor is usually trying to defend his own method of teaching and has little chance to internalize his tutor's guidance. It is expected of the tutor to first build a relationship of trust with his student, because there is no way a tutor can force his student to receive his advice (John, 2001).

Tension and power dynamics (tutor-mentor-student) impact the tutor's role, his obligations, and relationships. He/she has to find the balance between his/her various responsibilities to the student-teacher, mentor, public school, and university (Slick, 1997). Even if all participants in the triad know their responsibilities, and the communication between university and school is well established, the human factor overrules. The quality of the interrelations between student, mentor and tutor eventually impacts the student's feedback and therefore his progress for better or worse. A difference of opinions between tutor, mentor and student-teacher does not necessarily spoil the relationships between them. Various points of view may enrich the triad and enhance student-teacher's development. Each of the triad may express his opinion in the feedback sessions, to extend the student-teachers view and perceptions.

The relationship of student-teachers with LD with their mentors and tutors is even more complex, because they wonder whether to reveal their LD, whether it will boost their development or hinder it (explained in Chapter 5 - part B).

6. Student-Teachers' Change and Development

Change in student-teachers' perceptions is positively related to opportunities and courage to be frequently engaged in situations of teaching. It is also, but to a less extent, related to student-teachers' observation of mentors' modeling, especially

if the mentors face complex teaching situations (Bandura, 1997, 1998; Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009; Karavas & Drossou, 2009; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Complex situations presented by experienced mentors encourage students to confront and reflect on their beliefs in order to change them (Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009; Karavas & Drossou, 2009).

Student-teachers' change of former beliefs is important for the students' development, but it is easier to apply in some domains than others. In the domain of instruction, change during practice is usually significant. Instructional competence or style (ways in which teachers organize the teaching-learning environment and their approach to teaching) increases over time. In contrast, the supportive traits such as interpersonal relations with pupils, warmth and sympathy stay usually stable during the training program (Malmberg & Hagger, 2009).

Still, even in the instructional domain, when students learn and believe in a new approach, they might not always be able to apply it because of their old habits and their mentor (who teaches in the traditional way). In order to internalize the new way of teaching, they should observe an experienced mentor who believes in it and applies it (Bhattacharyya, Volk & Lumpe, 2009; Karavas & Drossou, 2009; Dunn & Rakes, 2011; Seker, 2011). Moreover, students-teachers' self-confidence (teaching-self) is a critical variable influencing their ability to adapt new ways of instruction (Dunn & Rakes, 2011; Seker, 2011).

Another condition for the process of modification and alteration of prior beliefs is an appropriate mix of a supporting yet challenging environment, enabling student-teachers to experience productive learning (Tang, 2003, 2004; Raffo & Hall, 2006). This mix of support and challenge is explained by the conceptions of 'low risk' and 'high risk' of settings, and the balance between them. A class where pupils misbehave and have no motivation could be considered a 'high risk' setting with a challenge too heavy for some student-teachers, whereas a 'low risk' setting with a motivated class could provide a fitting challenge which provides student-teachers a sense of possible success (Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004; Brannon & Fiene, 2010). The appropriate setting, whether 'low risk' or 'high risk', is directed by the tutors and mentors as part of their tasks. Tutors and mentors should be aware of the importance of school placement for students with LD who need a rather supportive setting.

The following section describes the stages a student-teacher foregoes in the process of growth and change (Kagan, 1992):

1. An increase in awareness – novices become aware of their own prior knowledge and beliefs, of pupils and classrooms and of the change their views are forgoing. It's quite common that student-teachers start to teach in class with

an idealized picture of pupils and classroom. Therefore, in the early stages of practice in class, the pre-service teacher or the novice needs to obtain procedural knowledge for handling class management and control and is not free to observe pupils' learning. To acquire this knowledge he relies on his mentor's experience in classroom.

2. Acquisition of knowledge about pupils – idealized and inaccurate images of pupils and their needs are reconstructed and used to modify and adapt the novice's image of self as a teacher. By interacting with pupils and during observance projects, novices begin to acknowledge their incorrect ideas about pupils and classroom and at the same time modify, adapt and reconstruct their teaching-self.

3. A shift in attention - from self to the pupils' learning and the planning of instruction. At this stage, when standard routine, instruction, and management are integrated, the novice can begin to concentrate on pupils' learning.

4 The development of standard procedures - the routines that integrate instruction and management become increasingly automated.

5. Growth in problem solving skills – these skills become more differentiated, multidimensional, and context specific. The student becomes aware of problems, and his thinking becomes more concrete and context directed.

Student-teachers with LD go through the same stages of development, only their problems may effect primary beliefs. Their beliefs may be slower to change, and each stage is sometimes extended (explained in chapter 5 – part C). They tend to be less flexible and more rigid than other students and hold on to methods they already know, therefore slower to learn new ways of teaching.

7. Professional Development by Framing through Reflection and Quality Feedback

The interaction between beliefs and quality of feedback, or internal and external inputs is the cognitive process of framing that the student-teachers experiences. Framing is a concept implemented in the educational context. In the educational context it means making sense of situations, events, actions, and knowledge, putting them into a "frame" in order to have a better understanding, aiming at improving teaching situations (Kagan, 1992; Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004). Proper reflection enables an accurate framing which is based on a strong teaching-self.

It is of great importance for the upcoming teachers, that they are aware of each of their actions while teaching, by going through the mental stage of reflection. Reflection is an inward cognitive process that alerts the student-teacher's awareness to his teaching and is used to examine practice in class, or after class, to further develop better teaching (Schon, 1983, 1987; Atkinson, 2004; Ottesen, 2007;.

The notions of 'reflection in-action' (insight during the teaching process - "thinking what they are doing while they are doing it"), and 'on-action' (insight after the teaching process is over) are meta-cognitive skills that teachers as well as student-teachers use to explain the context of their action. Reflection occurs when the practitioner is able to 'stand back' and occupy a neutral position in order to make a rational analysis of practice, of self, others or social procedures, for the benefit of improved teaching and further development. Reflection may occur when the practitioner is (1) alerted to a problem, (2) reads the situation, (3) decides what to do on the spot, or the next time, and (4) proceeds in a state of continuing alertness (Schon, 1983, 1987; Atkinson, 2004; Brannon & Fiene, 2010; Sharil & Abd. Majid, 2010; Myers, 2012).

Student-teachers with LD may have more difficulties being alert, simultaneously attend to all problems in class, and continue teaching at the same time (as explained in part B).

There are different ways to view reflection. One method divides the concept of reflection into three modes that may sometimes overlap or coincide. A reflective event may comprise elements of all or some of the modes (Ottesen, 2007): (1) Reflection as induction and extension of acceptable ways of seeing, thinking, and acting - mentors and tutors provide workable solutions from their pool of practical knowledge. (2) Reflection as concepts' development. For example, concepts like 'learning' or 'approaches to teaching' are brought up in order to discuss a problem. (3) Reflection as off-line or imagined practices. Different ways to represent learning – like adding music to a language class.

Reflection may occur at different levels (Myers, 2012): (1) descriptive writing – this is considered as lowest level or not reflective at all, just describing the event. Descriptive writing describes events, actions or situations, without making any attempt to provide justification. (2) Descriptive reflection – going a step beyond mere recall, by making some attempts to provide justification for events, actions or situations, in a very basic and descriptive way. The main goal is practical specific problem solving based on personal judgment. It addresses the question 'how', not questioning the nature of the problem itself. (3) A more sophisticated

way of thinking about events, actions or situations. Dialogic reflection – answers the 'why' questions and presents alternatives. It suggests a discussion or consideration of views of others (4) Critical reflection – giving reasons for events, decisions, or actions taking into account historical, social, and political contexts.

As for teaching, if reflection lacks the high levels of reasoning for events and actions, it will not affect decision making and therefore not improve future teaching. Critical reflection can offer student-teachers the chance to seriously think about the pedagogical implications of their teaching and the effect their actions have on their pupils. The deeper kind of reflection develops and changes students' performance and therefore student's self-efficacy. As a consequence of critical reflection, not only students' performance changes and improves, but also their perceptions and beliefs about themselves as teachers (Brannon & Fiene, 2010; Sharil & Abd. Majid, 2010; Myers, 2012).

Reflection may lead to different conclusions. Teachers might presume a prior bias as to problems in class, and as a result, their incorrect interpretation of the problem leads them to wrong conclusions which do not necessarily improve their teaching (Tang, 2002, 2003, 2004). For example, in a situation of restless pupils, there could be several interpretations - the task is too complicated, the teacher's instructions are not clear enough, or the class is not mature for such a learning approach. In the process of reflection, each of the triad - the student-teacher, the mentor, and the tutor may interpret the event differently. At times student-teachers really believe in their interpretation, in spite of their experienced mentor's feedback (Atkinson, 2004).

It is the task of the mentor and tutor to lead the student to interpret the teaching context appropriately by reflecting on it more effectively (Brannon & Fiene, 2010; Sharil & Abd. Majid, 2010).

Appraisals of a student-teacher's lesson by tutor, mentor and the student himself, could be both congruent and different on several points. Difference can be interpreted as contributing to a multifaceted evaluation, but nevertheless, a common foundation is also needed to assess the different aspects of a lesson (Tillema, 2009).

Reflection on students' teaching and decision-making is best practiced and demonstrated during feedback conversations between tutor, mentor, and student. For the purpose of critical reflection during qualitative feedback conversations, mentors and tutors should create a comfortable environment, devote adequate time, support inquiry, seek reasons and evidence, and encourage alternative perspectives (Brannon & Fiene, 2010; Sharil & Abd. Majid, 2010; Myers, 2012).

The quality of feedback relies on the mentor's and tutor's sensitivity and the tone and language they use – whether constructive or destructive. It also relies on the tutors' and mentors' understanding of the emotional situation of the student, and the time they are willing to spend on feedback. Students readily accept their teacher's comments as to the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons, but defy a list of mistakes as brutal, negative, and causing insecurity (Hayes, 2001; Tillema, 2009). Dealing with student-teachers with LD, tutors and mentors should be more sensitive to their emotional state of mind. They should emphasize their students' strengths in order to help them overcome their difficulties.

Trainees expect tutors to make full use of observation notes, whatever form they take (written or spoken), and to give specific and detailed comments immediately after the lesson. They all want tutors to offer them advice, suggestions, areas of improvement, encouragement, and guidelines which in fact most tutors provide (Hyland & Lo, 2006). Student-teachers' expectations for supportive feedback conversations is crucial especially with student-teachers with LD but not sufficient to develop critical reflection. To ensure student-teachers' participation in feedback conferences, they need to have the opportunity to voice their own concerns during discussion. Usually they can express their views at the beginning of the meeting, but often the tutor continues with his agenda and the students do not have another chance to speak their mind (Hyland & Lo, 2006).

Even if given the opportunity to speak in feedback conversations, student-teachers may not feel comfortable to respond, reply, and answer back. The reason could be the connection they make between feedback conversations and the power tutors and mentors have over their grades and future as teachers (Shantz & Ward, 2000; Anderson, 2007).

It is quite reasonable that the more proficient student-teachers are, their self-efficacy grows and their critical reflection skills improve and deepen. It follows that they are able to analyze their teaching, make revisions, and implement change. This process results in empowered teachers and increased pupils' learning (Sharil & Abd. Majid, 2010; Brannon & Fiene, 2010).

The concept of reflection relates to three other concepts: Framing, Teaching-self, and Repertoire, which have a decisive influence on teachers' enhancement and change.

Chapter 3: Research Approach, Questions, Assumptions, and Goals

1. Research Approach

I chose to use the qualitative-social- naturalist -constructivist approach for my study.

- Qualitative-Social - as opposed to the quantitative-positivist approach, which organizes the information gathered in a hierarchy, such as the relation between cause and consequence, according to the qualitative-social approach, relations between data assembled is non-linear - inputs affect each other reciprocally, one event has impact on another and vice versa.

Researchers also wish to discover rather than test variables in order to reveal new insight (Shkedi, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In my research, each and every social factor contributing to these students' success is mutually rather than hierarchically related and has reciprocal impact. I also looked for inputs contributing to these students' success and factors that may affect these inputs, so I couldn't possibly use methods of testing variables which I didn't find yet.

- Naturalist - researchers, who construct their study according to this approach, view the phenomenon they explore as holistic in its natural environment. They wish to understand events and situations as a whole integral occurrence in their natural environment. The assumption is that the factors which are part of the phenomenon relate to each other and cannot be separated from one another. In order to understand the phenomenon, it must be located within the relevant social, political and cultural context (Shkedi, 2006; Shlasky & Ariely, 2006; Sabar & Dargish, 2006; Shlasky & Alpert, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). It follows that the historical background and conditions are also part of the whole picture (Shkedi, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In order to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon of student-teachers with LD in practicum, it seemed advisable to explore the context of these students in college and in school (the two relevant settings in which they are trained), and to investigate personality attributes as well as external aspects contributing to their advancement. All these factors are studied in the current research in context of the students' teaching community, their tasks and obligations, and the help they achieve by their tutors and mentors in practicum.

In view of this integrative, complex picture, how can variables of personality and professional quality be measured and isolated from one another; how is it possible to assure that specific factors are the cause of these students' improvement and not other factors such as their college training, families' support, friends and peers, or their natural professional growth. Furthermore, the phenomenon of LD in higher education would be better understood as part of the students' past experience in school as some of them chose to reveal.

- Constructivist - another unique feature of the qualitative method is the way the investigator interprets the reality investigated. The researcher explains it on the basis of negotiations with his study's participants (by interviews, observations and questions) (Shkedi, 2006; Shlasky & Ariely, 2006; Sabar & Dargish, 2006; Shlasky & Alpert, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). He assumes "that individuals develop subjective meanings of their own experience...the research relies on the participants' views and their own understanding of the situation studied" (Shkedi, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Moreover, the qualitative explorer looks for new insights according to his interpretation and understanding (Shkedi, 2003; Shlasky & Ariely, 2006; Sabar & Dargish, 2006; Shlasky & Alpert, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009).

In this research using interviews as the main tool, I revealed the participants' perceptions as to the phenomenon of student-teachers with LD in practicum, by asking questions and explaining their answers according to my better understanding. These interviews revealed the participants' narratives of their lives (in the case of student-teachers with LD), or their LD student-teachers' lives (in the case of supervisors - mentors or tutors).

- Narratives – are part of the constructivist approach. In the last two decades, the narrative in the qualitative study is considered a common way of investigation in social research (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008). The narrative-constructivist approach assumes that the most complicated and rich experiences and phenomenon in life are presented through stories and narratives told by people who experienced these events themselves (Shlasky & Ariely, 2006; Shlasky & Alpert, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). These stories are assumed to be individual internal representations of events, thoughts and feelings – to which narratives give external expression. In these stories one can trace the impact of social factors on actions and thoughts. (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008; Babbie, 2010).

The researcher wishes to understand the events just like those who participated in them, ascribed to a social or human problem; consequently subjectivity is not considered a disadvantage. The most powerful way to understand people and

their way of life is watch, speak, listen and participate in their natural environment. The purpose is to capture multiple perspectives on events (Shkedi, 2006; Shlaski & Alpert, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2009).

In my research, the findings are mainly based on participants' narratives as told by them in the interviews. They chose the narrative-biographical strategy to present their own stories about themselves, or about students they supervised. The narrators in this study included student-teachers with LD themselves, their tutors in college and their mentors in school. All narratives involved at least one story about a student-teacher with LD, and each of the narrators told the story from his point of view describing the student's problems and ways of coping. Different researchers would run into different conclusions while exploring the same events, even when using the same data and tools. The meaning I attached to the reality in my study might be different from that given in another study, in the very same field. My observation notes of lessons carried out by these student-teachers, the support center's protocols, and the interviews, all together constructed the meanings I revealed.

- The narrative researcher uses the narrative as a method to support a possible change in society caused by individuals and collectives (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008; Babbie, 2010).

The approach to LD and to student-teachers with LD went through many social and regulatory changes. In my research I present the problems of student-teachers with LD aiming at improving and enhancing their chances.

Apart from the above reasons, the research questions are framed in such a way that it's best to answer them by choosing the qualitative-constructivist approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

2. Research Questions

General Questions

Some general questions which came up in the face of the growing number of student-teachers with LD:

- How should the college prepare for the training of this population?
- What are the mutual actions and interactions between these students and people they meet during their training period (peer colleagues, tutors, mentors, other teachers, and college staff)?

Thinking about it further, I changed the general questions to more operative, specific questions:

- What is the empowerment process of student-teachers with LD in practicum?
- How does this empowerment process unfold and develop?

After reading theoretical material about 'empowerment', and looking at the interviews, the research questions were refined.

The Final Research Question

What factors, in campus and school, could contribute to the success of student-teachers with LD; which factors are dependent on the students themselves and which depend on their tutors and mentors?

3. Basic Assumptions

1. Students with LD have special needs.
2. These students are able to cope with difficulties in college.
3. They can cope with difficulties within the school setting during their practicum training stages and later while working.
4. Informed support by their training staff is crucial for these students' success.

4. Research Goals

General Goals

To provide an overview of the difficulties of college students with LD and the ways to cope with these challenges more effectively.

Specific Goals

1. To define the difficulties of students with LD and their impact on their performance.
2. To focus on ways students with LD can deal with their own problems in practicum.
3. To shed light on ways their tutors and mentors can enhance students' success.

Chapter 4: Research Method

1. Research Population

25 Student-teachers with LD

10 School training- teachers (mentors)

13 College tutors

The average age of student-teachers with LD participating in this study is 29.6. They studied in Beit-Berl College teacher training program, in different tracks:

9 student-teachers with LD belonged to the Early Childhood track: 1 student just graduated and looked for a job as part of her first year of internship, 4 students were in the third year of practicum, and 4 students were beginning their second year.

8 student-teachers with LD belonged to the high school track: 1 student has just graduated and worked in high school as a History teacher in his first year of internship, 2 were in their third year of practicum – one of them specialized in History and the other in Social Sciences. 5 were in their second year - one specialized in Bible teaching, and the others in Social Sciences.

5 students with LD belonged to the elementary school track: 1 has just graduated and worked in school as part of her first year of internship, the others were in their first, second, third and fourth year of practicum. They all specialized in special education.

3 student-teachers with LD belonged to the Art track: 2 were in their third year of practicum, and 1 in her first year.

The average age of the 10 mentor-teachers was 48 years old. The mentors that trained the students included: 5 Early Childhood teachers, 2 Special Education teachers in elementary school, and 3 high school teachers.

The 3 high school teachers specialized in History and Social sciences, History and English, and in Social Studies. Their average experience as teachers is 21 years, and their average experience as mentors is 14 years.

The average age of the tutors was 53 years old. Tutors coached in different tracks: 4 Early Childhood tutors, 1 elementary school tutor, 4 Special Education tutors, 4 high school tutors (1 Mathematics generic tutor; 1 Special Education tutor, 1 generic Hebrew Language tutor, 1 History and Social Science tutor). Their average experience as teachers is 16 years, and their average experience as tutors is 16 years.

All tutors and mentors had experience teaching students in different stages of development. They taught students in their first, second, and third year of study.

2. Research Tools

- 48 interviews based on an open ended question and semi structured supporting questions.

The interviews revealed narratives of the students' struggle as pupils in school, as college students, and as novice teachers. These narratives included themes and events students with LD told about themselves, as well as stories their tutors and mentors told about their encounter with students with LD.

- 10 Observation journals of lessons/activities, feedback conversations and discussions, including observations of 10 lessons students with LD performed during their practicum.

- Assessment papers and support-center protocols of students with LD. Each session the students with LD have with an expert in the support-center is documented.

Interviews were the main tool used in this paper, while other tools were used to support and confirm data.

3. Research Procedure

The field work of this research has been conducted during 2007, 2008, 2009. The interviews were based on an open-ended question directed at the students:

- "Tell me about your experience in practicum".

Supporting questions serving as reference points:

1. Tell me about your difficulties.
2. Tell me your strong points (features and abilities).
3. How did you cope in practicum?

The same open-ended question and reference points were directed at their tutors and mentors:

- "Tell me about your experience with a student with LD in practicum".

Supporting questions serving as reference points:

1. Tell me about your student's difficulties.
2. Tell me about your student's strong points (features and abilities).
3. How did you cope with your student in practicum?

Data Analysis:

The data analysis assembled from the interviews was carried out in accordance with the biographical-content – life events, attitude, thoughts and motivations. The language of the narrator was examined for further clues. The narrators' stories have been read and explored, till the research main themes were revealed (Sabar & Dargish, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

Stage 1: Organizing the data for analysis involved transcribing the interviews, writing field notes and sorting the data into different types, according to the source of information (Creswell, 2009).

Stage 2: Reading through all the data in order to reflect on its' meaning, assigning the different issues (Creswell, 2009) to headings according to the narratives' plot: introduction, problem, turning point, solution, and coda.

Stage 3: Beginning a coding process by organizing the material into segments, giving meaning to the information by categorizing it (Creswell, 2009, Merriam, 2009). The first three categories were explicit and fit the support questions: about difficulties, strengths, and ways of coping of the students.

Stage 4: Using stage 1, 2, 3, I proceeded to analyze all interviews - going back and forth from interview to interview, (Merriam, 2009) finding unexpected categories as well; for example: tutors' and mentors' patterns, such as their coping styles, static versus dynamic approach of tutors and mentors (later explained).

Stage 5: The categories were organized in a hierarchy, and refined to make sure that each phrase or segment belongs to one category only (Shkedi, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

Although in qualitative research the coding process and its analysis is often interrelated, on chapter 5 - Findings I decided to present the most obvious categories (stages 1-3) first, and then I revealed other categories (stages 4-5).

As part of stages 1-3, I revealed the supervisors' patterns of coping styles, their various and unique ways they coped with the student-teachers with LD.

Stages 4-5 include tutors 'and mentors' role perception as exposed in the interviews, as well as data about their patterns of approach and judgment which I interpreted while reviewing their interviews. Stages 4-5 also present students with LD stages of professional development in college, their perception as to tutors' and mentors' desirable qualities, their own frustrating biography, and their difficulties in disclosing their LD.

Although the main analysis relates to the narratives' content, I referred to the feelings and thoughts of the informants as explicitly expressed by them, or sometimes by body language and linguistic style (metaphors, choice of words, intonation, pitch, and pauses) (Merriam, 2009).

4. Validation

The purpose of this qualitative research is to analyze perceptions, thoughts, and actions and find patterns of behavior and approaches, rather than to predict a phenomenon as a result of factors. Although validation is less expected, when observing a social phenomenon, it is of great importance to find informants that have the ability to narrate clearly, reveal different point of view, and present the information in the most interesting way (Creswell, 2009).

Some validity could be found since the main themes were uncovered through the many repetitions and details:

- The narrators stories were monitored with the information presented in the assessment papers and support center's protocols.
- Three kinds of informants were interviewed; students with LD, their mentors in school, and their tutors in college. In five cases of five student-teachers, their

five mentors and five tutors, each of the triad, told the story of the same student-teacher with LD separately, and related to the two others as well. This could be vividly described as three circles of narratives relating to student-teachers with LD in practicum. Thus, the phenomenon of these students in field work could be observed from three points of views in a process of triangulation, and enable cross examination of data and perceptions in order to validate them (Creswell, 2009).

Chapter 5: Findings – Interviewees' Perceptions

Part A: Tutors' and Mentors' Narratives

Tutors and mentors were asked an open-ended question: "tell me about your experience with a student-teacher in practicum".

The supporting questions that served as reference points referred to the tutors' and mentors' perception as to students' difficulties, strengths, and the ways they coped with these problems. The following quotations are tutors and mentors responses to these three questions as derived from the semi-conducted interviews. The data in this chapter- part A and B is arranged according to categories set up in the first three stages mentioned in Chapter 4 (Research Method - part 3 – Research Procedure).

In the interviews, mentors and tutors revealed patterns of coping styles to deal with the students' difficulties as well as their own role perceptions as student-teachers' supervisors of student-teachers with LD.

1. Perceptions of Tutors and Mentors - Students' Weaknesses

Tutors Observe Students' Academic Weaknesses as Reflected in the College Didactic Studies

A Hebrew Language tutor who trains students for junior high and high school, talked about a student she described as having "*literacy problems*", and therefore couldn't deal independently with the assignments she was given in college.

- "*The student had literacy problems, she had difficulties in reading academic material and she had problems dealing with all subject matters*".

As some tutors explained, many students can handle simple reading or writing material necessary for pupils in school, but when facing their academic assignments in college, they find it difficult to cope.

Literary difficulties affect the ability to read, understand and analyze complicated texts as well as the capability to deal with assignments related to those texts. These deficiencies will also affect the students' ability to learn and be updated in the future.

An Early Childhood tutor explained 'organization problems' and 'writing problems' the student had while dealing with different tasks:

- *"He didn't answer some questions and didn't relate to some of the subjects as if he didn't see them... there were questions and titles he ignored and some tasks were prepared in a very shallow way".*

An elementary school tutor talked about different 'organization problems':

- *"He didn't always hand tasks on time, sometimes he asked for more time..."*

A junior high generic tutor spoke about one of her "*brightest students*" who suffered from attention disorder:

- *"One of my students, who specialized in history and social science, had attention disorders. During lessons I led in college, he had difficulties concentrating and therefore disrupted the lesson's course".*

An Early Childhood tutor talked about her student's attention disorders: skip

- *"I read his body language, when he was moving on the chair I asked him: do you need something? He said: I can't sit but it's interesting..."*

As expressed in their own words, students with LD might have to deal with various shortcomings, such as insufficient reading skills, organization problems which affect their exam results and their time table, also attention disorders projecting on their concentration ability (ADD, ADHD).

Although I asked the tutors and mentors to describe students' problems in practicum, the tutors and mentors focused mainly on academic problems in their didactic lessons in college. They referred much less to the students' problems as teachers in practicum. The academic difficulties of these students started as

pupils in school and are well known in research literature. It effects practicum but is not the core of this dissertation.

Emotional and Social Problems Relating to Performance in College

Learning Disabilities leave their mark on the students' personality as well.

An Early Childhood tutor who was intrigued by the aggression her student showed in college:

- "She organized her friends in class for some kind of revolt. I heard her talk in a very blunt way to the head of the department. Although I don't usually intervene in matters which don't relate to my duties, I went out of my room when I heard her expressing herself in such exaggeration".

In frustrating situations some students may become introvert or rude.

LD have their affect on all domains of life including the emotional domain. The appearance of emotional and social problems of people with LD is similar whether in college, in practicum, or anywhere else. Therefore a trait like aggression may influence the performance in school and the ability to communicate appropriately as human beings.

Following are difficulties affecting specifically practicum, as described by tutors and mentors. Difficulties concerning these students in practicum were not discussed in research literature.

Tutors and Mentors Describe Their Students' Difficulties in Practicum

Organization problems appear in class work too. An Early Childhood tutor explained the student's problems in writing his lesson plan for kindergarten:

- *"He had difficulties in verbal organization, also generally in organization and it reflected on his lesson"...*

A Special Education mentor spoke about other organization problems:

- *"She had tremendous difficulties in time planning and organizing...even organizing her table in class..."*

An elementary school tutor and mentor referred to their difficulties dealing with a student who had focusing problems:

- *"She had a hard time focusing on the main points"*

A kindergarten mentor:

- *"She had problems focusing on lesson targets; she was also absentminded and forgot things ..."*

Some tutors pointed out the lack of self reflection and self evaluation of their student. An Early Childhood tutor explained:

- *"She lacks self evaluation; she thinks everything is great... when it's really shallow. The children were bored, everyone could see that."*

A junior high generic tutor described the way her student dealt with attention disorders in practicum:

- *"One of my students who specialized in History and Social Science, had attention disorders... In practicum, while teaching his pupils, he preferred to lecture in front of his class rather than work with the same class divided into small groups. He felt he loses control and attention, when working with different groups all at once."*

Emotional and Social Problems in Practicum

A special education tutor talked about his student's emotional difficulties while dealing with a child with special needs:

- *"She couldn't separate between her task (as a teacher) and her identification with a child with special needs. She thought the kids laugh at him and she burst into tears."*

An Early Childhood tutor described her student's anger towards her kindergarten mentor and the way she expressed it:

- *"She was over sensitive towards a specific child and his needs. She saw only this particular child, and she criticized the training teacher because of her behavior towards this child. She did not succeed in separating between her difficulties as an adult and the child's difficulties."*

As a result of their own difficulties, some students become very sensitive to the children's needs. They cannot separate the children's problems from their own.

A junior high Mathematic tutor described her student's lack of confidence:

- *"The student seems to lack confidence especially as to the subject matter when standing before class. Only when she got reinforcements she became more confident."*

A junior high didactic tutor also talked about self confidence:

- *"She had a hard time being assertive and authoritative".*

A Bible and Language mentor explains:

- *"She had low self confidence facing the class; she had a low self-concept..."*

In most cases, in practicum, the student-teachers are confronted for the first time with the way their problems are exposed while teaching. Tutors and mentors mentioned memory, focusing, organization and attention decentralization problems.

The results of these problems are difficulties to obtain many academic skills: planning the curriculum, finding material and organizing it coherently, writing the plan and generally focusing on the main issues. However, teaching in class needs all those skills, but also others, quite different ones.

Performance in class demands first of all: focus on main issues of the lesson plan in a certain order, to allocate time properly between different parts of the lesson. In addition, the student needs self confidence, self esteem, and self reflection. Managing a class also includes: being authoritative, de-centralization of attention, absorbing and responding to the various stimuli simultaneously and ignoring 'irrelevant noises'.

In practicum the students' emotional and social problems are intensified.

One can see that as a result of their disabilities, students have diverse problems which probably reflect on their professional life as well as on their social life in every domain.

2. Tutors and Mentors Reveal the Strengths of their Students

The following quotations relate to some of the advantages of student-teachers.

An elementary school tutor said about her student:

- *"He had excellent written summaries and reports, because he worked so hard and did everything I asked him to do."*

Usually the academic literacy skills are not part of the students' qualities, for they have to struggle much more in order to succeed.

As already mentioned, teaching requires more than academic skills; it involves social talents, high motivation, and self awareness.

A Hebrew Language tutor who trains students for junior high and high school:

- *"She (the student) had social skills and a warm personality and every one wanted to support her. Her sympathy and pleasantness aroused empathy."*

An elementary school tutor talked about her student:

- *"Because of his kindness and his disabilities he could understand children's problems".*

A Special Education tutor:

- *"Her relationship with the children, the way she addresses them, so sensitive and bright"...*

A kindergarten mentor says:

- *"I saw a warm, loving student who has a wonderful relationship with the children, but nevertheless knows how to set limits."*

Describing the students' weaknesses, I pointed out that some students lack communication skills and self reflection, but the citations above show that other students do have those advantages.

A high school didactic tutor explained:

- *"He had such high motivation, good relationship with pupils; he loved to teach and tried so hard to be part of the 'school culture'. He always volunteered to work with small groups of pupils and spent many hours in school on his own time and consulted me and his mentor, he was also very creative."*

A History mentor described:

- *"She had a lot of ideas and high motivation..."*

An elementary school tutor said:

- *"He has self awareness and is critical towards himself."*

A Special Education mentor:

- *"He works hard, he sticks on to the time table, he loves children and teaching the subject matter, he knows the material and has respect for me and everyone".*

These qualities (great efforts, high motivation, and pleasant personality) are probably the training staff's drive to help students cope and progress.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2-7 (Factors Contributing to Success in the Academic Field and Beyond), we also see in the interviews that students are described as creating their lobby and setting high goals for success as part of their self-determination skills.

3. Tutors' and Mentors' Patterns of Coping Styles

To get a clear picture of the tutors' and mentors' different patterns of coping with students and their difficulties, I divided them into eight categories – eight patterns of coping styles. I'll explain the different styles by quoting tutors and mentors accordingly:

3.1" Giving In"

An Early Childhood tutor explained:

" She doesn't know how to challenge the children, she is not open minded, for her it seems challenging but her activities are really very shallow, concrete; although she is so sweet and she creates a warm and supportive atmosphere, she creates a lot of sympathy...she will be a sweet teacher, somebody else will challenge the children".

A Mathematic high school tutor said:

"You should believe in the student's ability, not by judging him but by accepting him...she will be a teacher...but a successful teacher – I'm not sure..."

A kindergarten mentor explained:

" She had many personal problems at home...I had a dilemma...should I be more lenient with her because this would interfere with my coaching...I didn't know what to do..."

These tutors and mentors sympathize with their student but don't know how to help him/her and therefore demand less. They emphasize the student's pleasant characteristics and forgive his/her malfunctioning.

This "forgiveness" attitude adapted at times by tutors and mentors may be explained by them as part of their so called "professional beliefs". Teachers believe they should understand their pupils-students and accept them as they are. It matches some of the traits the tutors and mentors think they should have: compassion, sympathy and acceptance of different people.

- "You need to have compassion and really be interested in somebody else."

- "You should have a special soul to escort this student."

3.2 "Acting like a Nanny"

An Early Childhood tutor said:

- "I think that my personal contact was the main reason for his (the student's) progress. With me he was open to talk about his problems"

A high school generic tutor:

- " It's important the tutor will have a close relationship with the student, he should have some information about his personal life that could influence his performance."

A Special Education tutor:

- "It's important to talk about personal issues, not just to see her (the student) as an object...the tutor if he won't show some compassion... (He can't be a tutor) "

A kindergarten mentor:

- " I collected food and clothes for her" ...

I would say that these quotations relate to tutors' and mentors' emotional side, not only to their students' LD. It's obvious they create a close relationship with the students; they are ready to dedicate more of their time, learning about their past, personal problems and many times advising on private matters.

3.3 "Creating a Lobby" (tutors):

A high school generic tutor:

- "I tried to find him the right training teacher."

A Special Education tutor:

- " In the feedback conversation we had (student, mentor and tutor), the training teacher (mentor) gave the student advice how to keep discipline in class. I explained the mentor and another teacher that's not what she needs... she needs to discipline the class in her own way, according to her personality"..

An Early Childhood tutor:

- "I decided to get him help from the support center; this decision depends on a tutor's perception".

A generic high school tutor:

"I told her (the student) to consult the dean's office about her choice to work as a junior high teacher and if teaching is the right profession for her. She is a good student, a hard working "ant", but she doesn't raise the children's curiosity or make their eyes glow".

An Early Childhood tutor:

- "One student had problems focusing on the main issues; therefore she couldn't put into words her activity goals. I'm sure that if she was willing to work together with the support center it could help her overcome these problems".

Tutors see a wider view than mentors of both settings (college and school) and may offer the student-teacher some alternative or help. They create contacts and relationships between the student, other training staff members and helping sources like the support center.

3.4 " Getting in Tune" (tutors)

A generic high school tutor:

- "She (the student) was in real anxiety when teaching frontally the whole class, though it is sometimes required. We talked (student, mentor, and tutor) about her practicum...I suggested she'll work for some time with small groups of children... You can teach everything in small groups".

A History generic tutor:

- "My student with ADHD couldn't teach in small groups because he had a hard time decentralizing attention and had to be more active in order to be in focus, so I let him teach the whole class together. This way he was an excellent teacher, all of the children loved his interesting lessons".

An Early Childhood tutor:

- "His first experience in telling the children a story, was not easy. I asked my students to use teaching aids but he had difficulties using them...he couldn't perform with them...one should accept a person, have a wide sight and be flexible, not demanding something because now we study teaching aids".

This style was mentioned in the interviews only by tutors. Some tutors are flexible and willing to change some requirements to suit the student's ability and tendency as long as his performance is satisfying. Unlike mentors, tutors are in charge of students' tasks and therefore may make decisions concerning the students' obligations and performance.

3.5 "Private Teaching"

An elementary tutor:

- "He sent me each lesson plan to check in advance, this helped a lot".

An Early Childhood tutor:

- "We had personal meetings after class; I tried to help her and give her tools to be more organized... I feel she depends on me. Every time I bring something new to the class, I teach her separately".

A Special Education tutor explained:

- "We (tutor and student) had private appointments after class; I tried to help her by exposing her to cognitive organizing tools like: tables, charts..."

A Special Education mentor:

- " She didn't know how to teach this subject, I tried to explain the reasoning for teaching this way".

A Bible and Language teacher:

- " I went over her lesson plans; I brought her books to enrich her knowledge".

A Special Education mentor:

- "I sent her to read material and told her to dare and ask me questions".

A kindergarten mentor:

I helped her build goals for her activities... I told her to start with stories which she loved to tell..."

Many tutors and mentors use this attitude which is more active and more task-oriented. Those tutors and mentors will invest time and efforts to help the student-teachers require strategies to compensate for their difficulties in the most effective way. It demands knowledge of students' difficulties and the ways to deal with them in practicum. Some tutors and mentors admit they don't have enough knowledge to lead the process of enhancing these students:

- "I'm not sure I'm capable of building with such a student the paradigm of knowledge required"...

3.6 "Coaching for Self Regulation"(tutors)

An Early Childhood tutor:

- " I tried to explain she should ask her training teacher to see her activities more often, she has to ask for feedback, she has to make her own progress towards self regulation."

A high school generic tutor:

- "It's important the student will learn his difficulties and adapt strategies most efficient for him."

These tutors help their student cope with their difficulties and gradually lead their student towards independent functioning. Some offer "scaffolds" because they sense that even if their student is advancing in practicum with their help, he should be on his own in his future career.

- "I feel she depends on me. Every time I bring something new to the class, she'll need me or somebody. This should change; she'll be on her own."

Tutors see a wider angle of the student-teacher's career than mentors; therefore they want him to become autonomous. Mentors' first obligation is to the pupils in their class, therefore some prefer to prevent student-teachers from making mistakes.

3.7 "Target Oriented"

An Early Childhood tutor:

- "...we can't let them hide under the title of "students with LD"; moreover we should help them overcome their problems and become good teachers".

An elementary school tutor:

- " There were times, I thought it is irresponsible to give her a diploma, she won't succeed in school and she won't be happy. I want to look at things positively but in school she won't expose her abilities."

A History and Bible mentor:

- "I think the students should cope like everyone else, therefore we have to relate to them as to regular students without concessions and they (the students) are aware of it and really know their disabilities....if we won't give in they'll be good teachers".

Those tutors and mentors look to see if their student is capable of reaching the teaching goals. If not, the tutor or mentor will find himself obliged to give up on his student or advise him to change track in college.

3.8 Modeling – "Do it like me" (mentors)

A kindergarten mentor explained:

"I can't tolerate the student running from one thing to another; this means I'm very well organized."(Talking about herself)...I told her: look how I do it, look what I do with the children, but she couldn't".

The mentor slips into an emotional explanation, explaining what she can't bear. In such a close relationship, some student's personal traits may irritate the teacher and influence his evaluation.

A high school History mentor:

"He learned many things from me, I allow myself to start a lesson with one subject and finish with another and it's o.k. But the student trainee went into too many details. I don't have a problem to divert from the main track if the pupils are interested...but when he switched from one subject to another he didn't know how to get back to the main topic again...I combine some subjects together, I use my language knowledge in History lessons ...but he has knowledge in computers, he can use technology in his lessons".

This high school mentor compared the student's way of teaching with his own. In his comparison this mentor looks for his student's strengths, like his talent in computers, in the same way he himself used his talent in languages.

A Special Education elementary mentor:

"In class it became unprofessional. She thought that in this lively class she should make friends with the pupils and thus be able to teach them. She did it differently, not like me, as a teacher, but she behaved as one of the children in class. The leader of the class, the kid that had to be calmed down, during dictations she would draw elephants in his notebook and he drew instead of writing his assignments. She disturbed the lesson and was like one of the pupils in class, it was not professional... She took me as a model but interpreted it wrongly...by joining the disturbing kids."

Mentors compared their student's performance to themselves, a comparison they can easily make because student-teachers work directly with the children in their class. Student-teachers naturally imitate their mentors, but should

accommodate to the situation. Thus, having a teacher as a model, does not necessarily promise success.

Those eight categories of patterns of coping styles brought up for the first time in this paper, are clear in theory, but in practice tutors and mentors use more than one style in coping with a certain student. The styles are chosen by them according to the specific situation and the specific student-teacher with LD.

During the interviews conducted with tutors and mentors, they came up with some insights not directly linked to the open-ended questions. Beyond the answers to the three supporting questions, tutors and mentors revealed their perception as to their own role as student-teachers' trainers. According to their understanding, they revealed two patterns of perceptions related to their role, and assessment of the student-teachers they met those students with LD that they told about in their interviews.

4. Tutors' Role Perception

While explaining the way they judged their students, tutors talked about the skills they themselves should have and revealed their opinion about their role perception, always in relation to their specific student. In many cases, these role perceptions also explained the quality of feedback they thought they should provide.

An Early Childhood tutor shared her opinion about her role perception:

- "A tutor in general and especially when working with students should be able to differentiate between students, be open to guide them in different styles. She should give adequate feedback to each student, not give every one the same feedback ...and she should be ready to invest time and effort after class... I wanted him to succeed, I showed sympathy and acceptance"....

The same tutor described another student:

- "She always uses her LD as excuses".

This tutor was not willing to invest in that student more than necessary. According to her opinion a tutor should invest a lot in his work, but some students do not deserve it.

Two Special Education tutors mentioned the qualities they think a tutor should have:

- "Every tutor or person who works with others needs sensitivity, knowledge and the ability to help others help themselves".

- "A tutor should be able to mediate effectively and take off the "scaffolds" gradually, thus passing over the responsibility to the student".

Both tutors talked about developing their students' self regulation and independence.

A Mathematic high school tutor:

- "A tutor should have patience, tolerance and empathy. She should be able to have a personal relationship with the student and provide him with self confidence."

An elementary tutor added:

- "A tutor should believe in the student, not judge him, but accept him...I believe in the ability to change..."

A Special Education tutor explained:

- "A tutor should have tolerance, ability to accept different students, and believe in the ability to change with suitable mediation. She should also be able to make the right decisions and have professional integrity..."

One of the things that made it more difficult to decide to stop the student's studies, was because she was already in her second year, she invested economic and emotional resources ..."

The tutor quoted above, also talked about the importance of suitable mediation as part of her task. She was the one who courageously mentioned the unpleasant part of her role. She thinks that a tutor should have enough integrity to be able to discontinue the student's studies if necessary.

A kindergarten tutor presented an interesting aspect of her role perception:

- "I am very attentive to the student but she doesn't want to get help at the support center. I, myself, would like to have an address to consult with...whether to get help at the support center – this depends on your role perception, also some tutors believe they have to reach every student...even someone who has to leave college, they should help him find an alternative..."

This tutor admits she doesn't have the means to deal with the student's problems by herself and is willing to get help from the support center both for her student and for herself. She also believes a tutor should help a student find his way even if he cannot continue his studies.

5. Mentors' Role Perception

During the interviews some mentors came up with important traits and skills they should have in order to accomplish their job.

A Special Education high school mentor:

"The teachers' training has to be suitable... the mentor has to find the problem of the student and its source and should take interest... to understand the difficulties and to work accordingly... if our goal is to help student-teachers grow, but the student with LD is guided by a criticizing mentor that humiliates him, this is castrating."

This mentor thinks mentors should be aware of their student's problems and adapt their help to the student's specific needs. She believes a mentor's attitude should be positive and professional and not disrespectful or insulting.

An elementary mentor said:

-" A mentor has to be the power which directs, pulls and points to the problems in order to help, not to give up and not to despair... but not at all cost. Only if there is a potential...The mentor needs life experience, intuition, sensitivity and a combination of all this...In order to be a mentor, one needs a strong sense of self esteem and confidence and the knowledge that some things are not in his power. Mentors are not always responsible for the failure or success of their student, although they feel so..."

A high school teacher revealed his opinion about the mentor's task perception and the desirable attitude to students with difficulties:

"...the question is also valid for a teacher who teaches any pupil with difficulties. He (the pupil) is a person, who deserves to be treated with honor, but there is no need to make it easier for him...To my mind, this student has to struggle like others, no concession. They should get the same treatment as ordinary students. He (the mentor) is really aware of it and does everything to take care of it and so by being firm, we'll get a better teacher in the future."

This high school teacher believes that though a mentor should be aware of his student's difficulties and help him, he should not be lenient with him if he wants to produce a good teacher.

tutors' and mentors' role perception is discussed in research literature regarding all student-teachers in practicum, while this paper emphasizes their role regarding these student-teachers with LD.

Tutors and mentors explained they should be professional yet understanding, see each of the students with LD as a different individual who is able to develop and change, and should also be willing to work hard for their students' success. Above all, tutors and mentors should have the integrity to evaluate their student without concessions.

6. Tutors' and Mentors' Patterns of Approach and Judgment

Each year of the four years in college, tutors and mentors evaluate the student's professional competence in practicum by means of feedback conversations, certificate and grades. This process involves crucial decisions, like the continuation of the student's studies, repeating the same class over again, transferring him to another more suitable track in college or stopping his studies in college all together.

Weighing students' weaknesses against their advantages and taking into account their stage of development (year of study), the tutors and mentors try to anticipate their future performance as teachers.

A high school generic tutor presented her belief:

- "It's interesting that this student and I... and also other staff members, believe that in spite of their disabilities they could contribute more to children and maybe understand them better than regular 'normal' students and teachers".

Moreover, a certain trait could be judged as an advantage by a certain tutor or mentor, and a disadvantage by another. For example, some talked about oversensitivity as a disadvantage while others saw it as a great advantage.

An Early Childhood tutor remembered her experience and the disagreement she had with other training staff members:

- "Some may see her oversensitivity as a problem but others may think this makes her more attentive to children with special needs".

Although different tutors and mentors have different priorities which influence their opinion and judgment, their general attitude to their student-teacher could be divided into two main patterns or approaches - the dynamic one and the static one.

The Dynamic Approach

A generic high school tutor shared her belief:

- "If the student and the tutor have awareness of the difficulties and the abilities and the way they will affect teaching, then the student's ability to change is possible."

This tutor did not talk about a specific case; she did not expose her priorities but mentioned her main goal - to see the student change.

A kindergarten tutor described a student who had problems:

- *" This student could not focus on the subjects she was going to carry out the following week...she claimed she doesn't get any feedback from her mentor in kindergarten. On the other hand the mentor claimed she did give her some feedback...beyond the mutual frustration, I didn't see any serious change...she wasn't willing to cope... there was no development"*.

Both quoted kindergarten tutors look for change and development in the student's performance in school.

One of them described another case of a student who had a personality problem – she was very aggressive:

- *"I'll help her deal with her difficulties in order to soften her aggression..."*

This tutor looks for change not only when judging performance in school but also while dealing with personal traits like aggression.

A special education tutor shared her opinion about a student who had difficulties teaching:

- *"In order to help the student and enable her to go through a process of change, in order to help her be more organized I set appointments with her after class ..."*

We see this tutor looked for improvement and change in organization.

A kindergarten mentor talked about a personality attribute and hesitated to make up his mind about it:

– *"Some people come to college with a boring personality, but maybe by reinforcement you can help them gain self-confidence and those things can change, when I think about it I'm not sure it's changeable".*

A Special Education mentor:

- *" A lesson is dynamic, therefore the student-teacher should be flexible...maybe even inflexibility is changeable..."*

These two mentors also looked for an improvement but were not sure whether that personality trait was changeable.

These dynamic tutors and mentors emphasize changes and improvement in students' traits and skills, but have their own priorities. Each of them emphasizes different changes. Some of them look for a change in personality, while others look for changes in didactic aspects. Moreover, the definition of improvement is somewhat vague. Each tutor and mentor may see it differently.

The Static Approach

In her interview, an Early Childhood mentor described a rude student. It's obvious she gives a high priority to positive personal traits and believes that some traits, like aggression, could not change.

An Early Childhood mentor:

- I saw in advance this case (of a rude student) has no chance and you understand this takes a lot of energy from the student and from the mentor...many times you can tell after two months that a student is going to be amazing and another student might end up being a teacher, but you won't trust her with your grandchildren"...

A Special Education tutor expresses his static approach:

-"Organization problems like this student has are real trouble, you can't be a teacher if you are so unorganized, I don't think anyone can change this fact, you're born like this!!"

I have to be very careful and say this does not mean these tutors and mentors don't look for the student's change and improvement; moreover most of them talked about the time and efforts they invested trying to help the students overcome their difficulties.

Although these tutors and mentors work with their students to improve their skills, they judge their students in advance, before they could change, improve or accumulate some experience. Their evaluation and judgment is based mainly on traits and skills those students already had or didn't have, and less on qualities their students acquired. I call their attitude the static approach.

I classified the tutors' and mentors' attitudes towards their student as dynamic or static, but in reality all tutors and mentors are somewhere in between the two extreme poles. Whether static or dynamic, all of them may evaluate students according to their personality, knowledge, performance, motivation or all these factors together. Moreover, the same tutor or mentor can be dynamic as to some traits and static towards others.

An elementary tutor who sees a certain personal trait as inherent, while relating to some didactic skills as changeable:

-"I think a student should achieve better results at the end of the year, but first of all, a student that humiliates children and doesn't respect them is never suitable to be a teacher. Didactic skills every one can acquire, it's a matter of time and experience, but a personality trait such as laziness ..."

Each and every one of us probably has his/her 'red lines' as to acceptable or unacceptable traits, but those lines differ from one person to another.

Part B: Narratives of Students with Learning Disabilities

The following quotations are students with LD responses to the three supporting questions (students' perception as to their difficulties, strengths, and the ways they coped with their own problems) as derived from the semi-conducted interviews. Although they were asked an open-ended question: "Tell me about your own experience in college ", if needed they were supported by the questions that served as reference points as well as primary categories about their difficulties, strengths, and ways of coping. Their answers revealed additional categories they decided to talk about: students' stages of professional development in college, their perceptions about tutors' and mentors' desirable qualities, their own frustrating biography, and their difficulties in disclosing their LD.

1. Perceptions of Students with LD of their Weaknesses

Student's Academic Weaknesses in College

An elementary school student-teacher:

"I have difficulties writing the professional teacher's portfolio, I don't have any problems to say the things during discussions or reflection sessions".

Another elementary school student-teacher:

"I had problems writing lesson plans and implementing them. Planning is always difficult for me, performing it depends ...In planning I don't have problems to find the materials but rather to frame it into beginning, central part and the end of the lesson".

A History and Social Sciences high school student-teacher:

"I have graphic problems, I can't write without the computer"...

The three students above have writing difficulties for different reasons. The first two students have difficulties in expressing themselves on paper, a typical problem of students with LD. The third student has specific graphic problems.

Student's Weaknesses in Practicum

An Early Childhood student-teacher explained:

"In the first year, in the private kindergarten, I had no problems, for the children were very young (2-3 years)... In the second year, the children were older (4-5 years). I had to be more organized, know the material in a more familiar way, on a higher level and teach in a more formal way. I was not organized during "circle time" and it was not structured rightly. I forgot things I planned and did not remember to plan beforehand. I had no experience teaching, so sometimes it did not match the kids' age or the lesson was too short."

This student had to learn how her problems influenced her practicum, and how they increased when the tasks became more complicated.

A third Early Childhood student-teacher:

"I felt over stimulated, too many things to manage all at once is not for me. At times I wondered is this my problem or also the children's (problem)."

A high school student-teacher:

"When I teach in class, I don't always remember what the children said and I have difficulties summing up..."

A History and Social Sciences high school student-teacher:

"I have ADHD, its attention and hyperactivity problems. Every noise in class, a truck driving by outside, a pupil coming in or asking a question distracts me. Since I have problems writing, I find it hard to write on the blackboard. "

Students' organization difficulties affected lesson planning and performing, and memory problems influenced their teaching; attention disorders (ADHD) caused

them overstimulation. Students were very much aware of their own learning problems and their effect in practicum.

Students Express Emotional and Social Problems in Practicum

A Special Education high school student-teacher:

"I had difficulties to discipline the class, to be their teacher and not their friend. They try me; I can't just be cool...in teachers' meetings I had a hard time reading the social map, understanding what to say and when..."

When asked about students' weaknesses, mentors and tutors described social and emotional problems in addition to the academic ones. Student-teachers themselves chose to tell mainly about their academic problems. This was the only case a student-teacher expressed her social problems. Many students with LD in college are treated by psychologists and are aware of their emotional or social problems, yet they did not want to expose themselves.

2. Students with LD's Strengths in Practicum

An Early Childhood student explained:

- "My strong point is my motivation, I believe in myself. On one hand, I am afraid and frustrated and feel stupid sometimes, it's difficult. On the other hand, when I come against walls, I tell myself to take a hammer and try to break them down. I do not pity myself, but prove to everyone that I'm different and smart and I can".

This student expressed ambivalent feelings, saying on one hand that she believes in herself and on the other hand she feels stupid. But it seems the balance tipped towards self efficacy, as a result of success.

A high school student-teacher:

"I want to be involved in school in as many activities as possible, I join field trips, and I teach voluntarily in the school's support center. I have high motivation to contribute a lot and succeed"...

An Art student-teacher:

"I see my personal experience as a pupil with ADHD as my advantage; it helps me treat children with the same problems. I volunteer in the school's support center".

A History high school student-teacher:

"As a teacher with ADHD I have an advantage, I show empathy, understanding and high sensibility"...

The 'learning disabled' often see themselves as stupid, but there comes a time, when some of them, can separate between LD and stupidity. Those students who chose the academic track seem to have enormous mental powers, motivation to make the effort and succeed. They also see their disabilities as an advantage with children who have problems. These students' strength in practicum relate to their self determination skills as described and explained in chapter B-7(Factors Contributing to Success in the Academic Field and Beyond), they gained a sense of control by making internal decisions like their desire to become teachers, their high goal setting etc. They also had external manifestations like persistence and learning to be creative.

3. Student-Teachers with LD – Strategies of Coping

Each of the interviewed students found a way to overcome their difficulties and be a better teacher.

A Hebrew Language, History and Geography student-teacher has a fundamental problem sitting for a long time and writing while observing lessons.

- "... So I write during observation for a shorter time or relate only to one specific aspect, like the teacher's discipline remarks in class".

He talked about this point of short concentration periods, focusing on one narrow aspect only, and added his need for some kind of rest during the lesson:

-"Also in the lessons I prepared and I focused on one narrow subject, I found it easier to develop an activity in which the class is active. I teach some and then

activate the group I work with, and then I organize myself and rest a little...when they work and talk it gives me a break"...

He finds the academic assignments difficult as opposed to the lively atmosphere in class:

"When I confront a class it is easier".

It seems that his problem is concentrating on his studies, not so much in class. So he found out he can study better in a group.

"Another strategy is studying in a group....others talk to me about the learning material and it is also more interesting...I explain to them and they explain to me. Dynamics is important...also to prepare a lesson with one or two students is preferable...when comparing academic study to practicum - during teaching activities I bloom".

An Early Childhood student-teacher, who talked about being overwhelmed and 'swamped', said:

"It was very strong, the feeling of being 'flooded' ... to succeed in too many things all at once – for me it is impossible".

She also related to the need for a pause: *"If I feel I'm 'swamped', I pause for a moment, cut myself off, look around me and decide whether this is the time to stop, or change, or go on".*

Like other students with ADHD, she also activated her class and said clearly that it helped with her attention disorder and her memory fault.

An Early Childhood student-teacher learned to master more than one activity at a time:

"I understood that I have to be able to decentralize my attention. I'm with one child and I can say 'one moment' and arrange something elsewhere and come back. I know that I have to be more attentive than others".

The following student-teachers thought the didactic aspect was second to the children's comfort:

An Early Childhood student-teacher:

- "I understood that it is more important for the kids to be busy and for the day to pass calmly than the success of the circle time".

An elementary school student-teacher:

- "I arrive at school ready with a plan, but if they are not attentive I leave everything and calm them down with the right activity, so as not to make it harder for them and for me".

An Art student-teacher related to the dynamics and activity in class:

- "I think that if a class is smaller it is easier...I'd rather have discussions because it is more interesting and I don't have to talk to myself. A discussion helps because of (my) attention disorder, just to talk when there is no interaction is less interesting. Even if I don't remember everything, the main purpose is for the pupils to be interested. Maybe I'll say some nonsense and be confused, but it is less critical. It is more important for me that the lesson is interesting than didactic."

The History student-teacher, who has ADHD and dysgraphics, explains:

- "Any twitch of a bird, a truck passing by, a pupil saying some nonsense, pulls me out of concentration".

He described his way to help himself and his pupils during practicum:

- "The first solution is taking Ritalin. I can then bring myself back to attention. I close my eyes for a few minutes. The pupils understand they were loud and become silent... I would rather not write on the board so I let one of them (the pupils) do it".

The strategies that the students used to cope with their problems can be summed up as follows:

1. Concentrating on one aspect only at a time.
2. The importance of studying with mates which creates activity and dynamics - as against working alone. Students gain the same benefit when activating the

class in a dynamic conversation, as against confronting the class and just lecturing them.

3. The possibility to take a pause and regain focus during lessons. They teach for some time and then activate the class and rest a little, or think about their teaching.

4. Letting one of the pupils write on the board. Writing on the board might distract students with LD, and sometimes they are not sure as to the spelling.

In spite of problems and strategies previously described, my observation journals (of lessons) reveal students' high performance as teachers.

These ways of coping are part of self determination skills called 'learning creativity' which include methods for coping and succeeding with the very circumstances previously considered impossible.

Student-teachers interviewees exposed their process of coping.

Stages of Development and Improvement

Finding ways to cope is an ongoing process which lasts at least all through the training period. It is influenced by the student's own personality, self-awareness, the mutual relationship with the training staff, the Support Center in college, and the school setting.

The following paragraphs relate to the way an Early Childhood student-teacher described how she coped with her disabilities in practicum, going through several stages over her training period.

Although research literature and the various interviews emphasizes all student-teachers go through stages of development and change, this specific description illustrates the limitations and the ongoing struggle a student with LD has to face. This description with some variations is typical of many student-teachers with LD.

The Improvement Process – *"I did it step by step"*

This student explained she improved gradually at her own pace. At the end of the second year the training-staff was surprised to see the change, because each time they saw the student performing, they didn't see much improvement.

- "Although the training staff felt nothing really happened, I did feel that there had been progress in the middle of the year, not only at the end of it".

She tried to improve her performance in a certain area at each of her visits in kindergarten, because she couldn't handle everything at once. She was much less surprised at the end of the year than the training staff.

Her self-awareness and the way she is able to analyze her process of improvement is quite amazing:

First Stage – Implementation of Strategies

- "I used to prepare cards and mark some leading points to help me remember what I have to do. Then, I rehearsed my activity beforehand with the suitable intonation. I made a list of materials I needed, so as not to miss anything. If I hear and also see I remember it later by heart. In kindergarten I did not need the cards. Using them would have distracted me.

At this stage I was so busy with my lesson plan and my goal that I did not see who is talking or disturbing."

Second Stage – Relating to the Children

- "Slowly I could spontaneously see the kids' world. At first it was robotic and rigid and then, slowly, I succeeded to fit in my nuance, my touch, in order to adapt to the current situation. At that second stage I could already relate to the children and to the content and watch that everyone is with me and does not miss things... To step up to a higher level if needed, or to simplify things, did not distract me anymore and did not threaten me. With the time I could integrate children's ideas in the activity and relate to the dynamics beyond the plan."

Third Stage – Organization

- "As for order, organization and aesthetics, it happened gradually. It was very apparent when I saw my mentor and tutor so surprised".

These three stages that she described so well could all be categorized as part of the "survival period". In this period the student showed how she improved her performance in order to meet the standard that is expected of her. Unless she could do so, she could not become a kindergarten teacher.

Fourth Stage – Creativity

"Now I could be more creative during the activity in kindergarten, I was free to be more resourceful and inventive".

One of the conditions to make some progress and improve is self awareness. The student became gradually aware of her problems how to overcome them which lifted her self confidence and self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is an important trait for improvement and success in class.

The Early Childhood student-teacher who described these four stages, finally graduated with honor, but still could not believe her success.

- "Appropriate feedback is important, but encouraging someone with a low self esteem is even more important, especially when he fails. The mentor said that the activity was well structured; I was assertive and did not panic when the kids tried me. Those were part of my difficulties in the past, and now she praised me for them and this continued through practice that year, I should have talked less and let the children talk more, but the kindergarten teacher didn't worry and believed in me. I am used to obstacles and all of a sudden the kindergarten teacher was so pleasant. I thought she is good hearted and pitied me, but she gave me recommendations for work in a kindergarten.

I thought, is it really me? Do I deserve it? Someone will find out that I have LD".

This student doubts even her success. It's clear that the LDs' impact is part of the students' self-perception.

4. Students Draw a Picture of Tutors' and Mentors' Desirable Qualities

In addition to the answers to the three questions, student-teachers with LD drew a picture of tutors' and mentors' desirable qualities, their own frustrating biography, and their difficulties in disclosing their LD. Tutors' and mentors' qualities are described in research literature regarding all student-teachers in practicum; in this context the focus is on the tutors' and mentors' qualities concerning students with LD. The frustrating biography is already revealed in many studies, but some students-interviewees in this research felt the need to express their feelings about their school history, though not asked about it. The disclosure of the LD is mentioned in other articles but not in regards to practicum.

Student-teachers described traits and qualities tutors and mentors should have as related to their problems and coping.

-An Art student-teacher:

"The tutor should know how to define things he saw in my lesson...to see the good points and the problematic ones and tell me the right way. There should be criticism, but the question is how. One has to emphasize the good things too, with respect and not aggressively, criticize with respect for the student who is also a person and invested a lot. It's important for the tutor to have practical up to date experience, to be connected to the field. As to the tutoring before (planning and preparing the lesson) it is very important. To give the student tools which help cope with building the lesson, confronting the class, defining the aims and so on".

Other students also mentioned the respect for the student and the importance of accompanying the student before his actual teaching in class.

An Early Childhood student-teacher also acknowledged the importance of experience for tutors or mentors.

"A lot of experience with himself and with students will enable the tutor or mentor to decide what to do with the student, because the tutor saw many students. He needs the professional knowledge to demonstrate or show me how to do things, to let me advance using my strengths".

A History and Social Sciences student-teacher summed it up:

- "Patience, tolerance, accepting of the other, and knowledge".

He also added:

- "The tutor has to take a course in 'LD'. As to personal traits: the love for people, love for the other...knowledge is not always enough..."

-An Art student-teacher:

- "He has to simply understand what 'LD' is. When I came last semester with my disabilities I got no support, there was no feedback to my lessons. How am I supposed to change if no one tells me? There also should be a sort of follow up around the planning and building of lessons not only a mark afterwards..."

-A student-teacher for the Informal Education- expressed the same idea of respect for the student in a different way:

- "The tutor has got to master variable styles of tutoring....to suit the tutored student; to be attentive, to conduct a conversation between equals, and to lead a kind of dialogue."

An Early Childhood student-teacher supported the idea of adjusting the mentoring style to each individual student according to his needs:

- "A kindergarten teacher-mentor should be attentive to her student with LD, know her difficulties, help her understand. She should not follow stereotypes, but be able to believe. The tutor should be human, flexible, not fixed or rigid, in order to allow the student to express himself/herself and not only please others. For example, if the student would rather report orally and not in a written form, she should enable it. To acknowledge the thought invested, the creativity, not only formal molds. To be able to identify abilities and strong points which generate achievements".

A kindergarten student-teacher talked, among other things, about mutual trust between mentor and student:

- "It's important we can really talk openly".

Some students mentioned above talked about treating a student as an equal human being and respecting the hard work he invested.

A high school Language student-teacher expressed the same thought in other words:

"It is important to say things in the right way. If you are angry, wait and talk later or tomorrow. Mentors should have empathy, openness, patience, willingness to accept the other. They should give a chance, not judge. There are those who block you in advance because they don't try to understand a person, why he is behaving this or that way. My mentor 'felt' me always...she empowered me..."

The students' ideas related to tutors or mentors are hereby summed up:

- A. They should learn and know what 'LD' is.
- B. Although they have to criticize, they should treat their students with respect as equal human beings, and have an ongoing dialogue with them.
- C. Professional knowledge is important but not enough. Personal traits like patience, flexibility, and empathy are very valuable.
- D. Mentor/tutor and student should have a trustworthy relationship.
- E. Tutors in the college need a lot of experience and a real connection with the field.
- F. Tutors and mentors should be able to treat every student according to his difficulties and needs. To be open-minded, acknowledge the student's wish to express himself and be creative.
- G. Feedback conversations after the lesson in school are not enough. Most significant is the follow up of the preparations before the activity in school - the tools the student receives from his teachers, the definition, and focusing on the lesson's aim.

5. Student-Teachers' Frustrating Biography

Four student-teachers with LD chose to tell their schooldays history. They could not separate their biography from their actual experience in practicum. I chose

to present the biography of all four students, beginning with the most detailed story of an Early Childhood student-teacher, in order to demonstrate the unbearable load students with LD carry into college.

The Early Childhood student's narrative begins in kindergarten:

"My father knew when I was still in kindergarten. Other children learned the letters and numbers, but the kindergarten teacher gave up on me".

We see that this teacher did understand something was wrong, but she probably didn't have the tools to deal with it.

She was diagnosed as a 'learning disabled' pupil in second grade and was transferred to a special education class:

" I didn't understand anything... In the middle of second grade I was diagnosed. I was moved to a special class and I understood some of what happened. In fourth grade they tried to let me study some subjects in a regular class, I sat in the class like a 'flower pot'. I had a neighbor who tried to help me with homework, but the teacher said my answers were wrong, so I never read my homework in class again."

Although she could understand a little in the special education class her ongoing failure whenever she tried to join a regular class will haunt her all through school.

- "In the fourth grade my mother found out that I did not learn anything in the special class, and raised a commotion in school, for she taught me the multiplication table in two days...The teacher said I did not want to learn. My mother did not believe her. My father did".

It was her mother who had faith in her and she remembers in pain how her father reacted, believing, like her teacher, that she was just lazy.

The First Turning Points – Success and Failure in Mathematics

Since the student was taught by her mother the multiplication table in two days, her mother asked for a school meeting to advocate for her daughter.

"The psychologist said that according to the diagnosis I could study in a regular class. My mother agreed, but she also understood I missed a lot of the

subjects that regular children have learned previously, so I was moved to a special education class in another school in the fifth and sixth grade. There I had a great success in Mathematics and I completed my course books way before the other pupils. Then my mom fought to integrate me in a regular class in Mathematics, and they did so, I joined the fifth grade in Mathematics and succeeded."

This was the very first time the student succeeded in studying an important subject. This first success in school could be considered a turning point, for it proved to her mother, teacher and herself that she could excel in some field. A strong meaningful, supporting person like a mother could navigate a child in the right direction which means the difference between success and failure.

This was indeed a triumph; the student learned Mathematics with regular pupils in a regular class and she did well.

Her eldest brother always boosted her self esteem, and assisted her to accumulate strengths, he also believed in her abilities:

"At first my mom helped me to believe in myself and then my eldest brother. He conducted with me motivation conversations, like" you are smart; there is a difficulty we have to overcome" He let me understand that I am unique, always strengthened me, helping me with my home work."

Like this student, other students with LD who experience many failures need to have some burning material to feed their ambition, to go on and study. Sometimes a taste of success may drive those pupils forward.

After the success came the dramatic fall:

- "At the age of sixth grade I joined the regular fifth grade in all subjects and this was my dramatic fall, because Mathematics was by then, more than calculation. It involved reading comprehension and I couldn't handle it, the verbal problems. I didn't have any background in Literature or in Geography...couldn't do my homework...I was always so frustrated I couldn't do my homework and I didn't get any help".

Humiliation and Abuse as Part of Her Social Life

Describing her social life, the student talked about her struggle to survive in school, before entering high school.

"In the special education class I was very popular, but in the regular class I was humiliated and everybody pestered me. I would beat the boys so hard and they loved to fight with me and annoy me. In junior high I hit the boys every day because they abused me. There were kids who knew my past while others didn't know, so I was scared they'll find out ...I always wanted to move to another school, to begin at a new starting point, so no one will judge me."

It is obvious why as a pupil she was happy to move to another school, where they did not yet know her past. This stigma of a Special Education class is understood by children already at an early age, and it sticks to the 'learning disabled' like the 'Sign of Cain' (Gen. 4.13).

The Most Significant Turning Point

Later, in junior high, she could understand some subjects a little better. She wanted to continue to high school and study Biology, although the school consultant "laughed at her face". She remembers the consultant said or thought: *"A zero like you cannot learn Biology"*.

Whether the consultant actually said it or Student B felt she thought so, does not matter. The burning feeling of offence, the belief that people think you are stupid accompanies the pupil/student a long way. This negative feedback from others builds up his/her self image and causes him/her to doubt himself/herself.

The school consultant tried to persuade her mother to register her for the lowest level class in high school - but her mother disagreed.

The student didn't give up. She always looked for another chance to learn like others. After her disappointment in junior high, she didn't lose hope but had the courage to go on. She wanted to study Biology and found a solution:

"I saw an advertisement for this agricultural school and all of my family came with me to the "open day" and everyone fell in love with that school. There I found the first light of my life. I started to succeed. We were 14 pupils in class, and 7 in the subgroups. The teacher loved me very much. I was in the most advanced subgroups. I could study well because the teachers in school had a special attitude towards their pupils, a more personal relationship. I worked

with animals. I studied Chemistry, Biology and Zoology. I passed the matriculation tests, all except Mathematics".

She wanted to pass the Mathematic exam on a higher level than her school offered, which she intended to do later. She described this school as the "the first light of her life", where she began to succeed in her studies:

- "This success renewed my self confidence as if I recovered from my illness, I had and I will succeed in everything".

That was probably the reason that later on, after school and on her own, she graduated easily in Mathematics.

Other Students

In the following paragraphs other interviewed students are compared to the Early Childhood student-teacher above. Although it is her private story, with some variations, it is also a collective biography of many other student-teachers with LD. Hereby I quoted some of their expressions and compared them to the first student's description of her life before college.

- A Special Education student-teacher (for the deaf) - said she was called 'stupid' by her brother and 'floating' by her kindergarten teacher. She described her private "Via Dolorosa" through several schools and various classes:

- "They always saw there is something, I began talking late. I was born with fluids in my ears and a considerable hearing deficiency. In the first grade I didn't grasp reading and writing. They wanted to transfer me to a special class, but my parents prevented it. School during those first three years was a nightmare. Reading was taught then by the individual method (as opposed to the frontal method) with booklets. The children read at an individual pace. It didn't suit me. I don't remember what happened with Arithmetic.... Sometimes the teacher used flash cards, which I could not read. I was frightened and ashamed, so once I wet my pants in the middle of class...from that moment on I could not play in the school yard. I ran away from school."

Her story, with some variations, is part of students with LD school days. Typically is her wandering from school to school:

- *"In the fourth grade I moved to another school nearby, it was better. I could read, the frontal reading method was significant for me. I couldn't then and to date, have not mastered the multiplication table. Until the sixth grade I stayed in that school and for junior high I moved to another one.*

Then my parents moved to Tel Aviv and I visited Alliance Junior High, where the French language as a third language was required, but my problem as always was not the spoken French. We had to write and learn all those grammar rules. I grasped the French pronunciation, but it was not enough. I had serious problems with Mathematics. I was expelled in the eighth grade and advised to undergo a private diagnosis.

I wandered again, this time to another junior high in Tel Aviv. I joined an integrated class (regular pupils with deaf pupils). There I learned the sign language quickly, but in the tenth grade I was again in danger of expulsion".

Her childhood was a long saga of changes; not only different schools but different environments, mates and friends, enough to damage and confuse anyone. But, these frequent changes are typical for other students with LD, and although uprooted time and again, in some situations it suited them.

A History and Social Sciences student-teacher - explained:

- *"Until grade five I learned in a regular class. In the sixth grade I was moved to a special class, but was integrated in a regular class for some subjects. In the seventh and eighth grade I sat in a regular class and sometimes joined a special class. I was not accepted by the local high school and moved to another, private high school in Tel Aviv. I spent the last two years of high school in another external private school (not belonging to the public system)."*

This student, like the first one and others, was transferred back and forth from a regular class to a special class. He was not accepted in the regular high school, but had to find some other solution.

Life and Death are in the Power of the Tongue (Proverbs 18. 21)

Harsh words of family members who accused the student during childhood of laziness cannot be wiped out. The experience of a father, mother or brother who did not believe in them is too painful. Some parents avoid recognizing their child's problems; for they do not want to realize he is not perfect. Moreover, the

environment at large refuses to accept and understand someone who seems to be pretty clever but is not able to master the technique of Writing, Reading or Arithmetic.

A Special Education student-teacher (for the deaf) said:

- *"I was very quiet and had no self confidence, because of a difficult relationship with my elder brother. From a very young age he had to care for me. He was three years older and took the trouble to tell me how stupid I was."*

This student who was almost expelled from school explained how her father and her principle *"changed my destiny"*:

- *"In tenth grade they wanted to expel me... My father came to school, I personally don't even know what he said there, but I know that my teacher is scared of me even today... I was the best in everything that had to do with verbal skills and persuasion".*

When the school staff wanted to force her out, she herself fought back:

-*"I cried and begged for a chance to continue... ... I promised to be under the supervision of the vice president of school, just let me stay. ... The principal...was very supportive because of my volunteering with the deaf pupils. As long as my average was at least 85 he let me do what I wanted, he let me join the deaf class for field trips... I was their sign language translator and I was like a teacher for them....I did that until the last year of high school and graduated with distinction".*

Her work as a translator into the sign language and as the teacher's right hand earned her a certificate of merit and the appreciation of the principal, who presented her with a video movie showing her at work in class.

She talked about tough decisions her parents (father) had to make. These decisions didn't start in high school; they began when she still was in elementary school:

- *"In first and second grade they wanted to transfer me to a special class, but my parents didn't let it happen".*

Reading her complete interview, it is not certain whether her parents' insistence was the best for her, but she remembers her parents as her protectors. This

probably happens whenever parents have to make a difficult decision. There really is no ideal solution and parents who don't have the tools to deal with those intricate problems can only do their best.

A History and Social Sciences student-teacher said about his father:

- *"He didn't believe in 'LD' "*.

His father tried to convince him that he was able to work with youth and conducted with him motivation conversations:

-*"You are tired like everyone because you are lazy. He suggested that I study something to do with youth promotion"*.

After all, it was his father who was the reason he became a student in college.

Not only family members, but teachers too could make a big difference and are sometimes remembered as a *"light at the end of the tunnel"*.

The same student-teacher continued:

- *"I had a wonderful teacher. I never before loved a teacher. Today I understand what a genius she was. I had an unreadable handwriting and she let me write the class newspaper. Although the pupils could not read it, she let me arrange and write and draw in the newspaper and other pupils joined me. I was recognized by someone, she believed in me"*.

A special relationship with such a teacher empowers those students for years to come and maybe gives them the courage to dare and try academic studies.

The student teacher who specialized in Hebrew Language, Geography and History, said:

- *"In junior high and high school I disturbed all the time and was punished frequently. I had one special History teacher and then a certain change occurred. This History teacher is my teacher for life. Once she prepared memorizing pages, I read them only once. The content was very interesting. Therefore at the exam I could rewrite the material all by myself into three pages. I just had to memorize material that was of interest to me anyway, and got the top grade – 100"*.

This grown up student was and maybe still is not sure he deserved the top grade. In his interview, he seemed to apologize for his success – he got grade 100 because the material was interesting anyway! Those seemingly unimportant episodes in school, for good or for bad, are engraved onto the students' consciousness and come up in most interviews.

Striving to Be Popular

A Special Education student-teacher (for the deaf) suffered humiliation and abuse from her class mates. Looking at the way she described her social interaction with her class mates; one finds a very detached child:

"I was aloof. I had a fantasy life and imaginary friends. In the first or second grade someone hit me with a broom on my head and my brother said that if I'll come to him and complain again, he will hit me too. I had no one to talk to. I couldn't distinguish between friends and enemies. Later, as a teenager, boys took interest in me because of my breasts, not for my wisdom, because of my looks not for myself. I believed I was stupid. I learned to imitate popular children. When they were loud in order to be heard, I shouted too. I was not accepted at any time."

This effort to imitate the exact behavior of popular pupils, in the hope it will turn her into 'one of the guys', was really pitiful. It probably points to some inability to read the social map, but also shows how much she wanted to be accepted.

While the students quoted above described their social isolation in a very emotional way, two students described their boyhood and social life in school only briefly and in a very laconic way:

A History and Social Sciences student-teacher described briefly:

- "In school I was aggressive, deranged, opinionated and an unfulfilled potential."

A student who specialized in Hebrew Language, Geography and History- said:

"In junior high and high school I would disturb and was ordered out of class all the time. I was the wild disturbing pupil all through elementary school."

Those two students didn't mention social isolation, but being aggressiveness and derangement could hardly help make friends. Moreover, bringing into account the frequent change of classes and schools all of the students went through, their social environment could not possibly be stable, dependable and assuring.

It is typical that some students remember themselves as very quiet in class - passive as *"a flowerpot"*, *"always wanted to please"*, and *"making great efforts because I was a good girl."*

Contrary to the girls, the boys exposed their frustration with loud and wild behavior. Whether too passive or too active, their LD influenced not only their ability to learn but also their social and mental behavior and their relationship with mates and adults.

I chose to include student-teachers with LD's sad biography, though it is not part of their practicum period. Their learning history prior to college accompanies in all domains of life and therefore mentioned in research literature. Their biography cannot be separated from their professional development.

These stories of history of humiliation, someone close (mother, teacher) who believed in the strengths and abilities, turning points, and the ups and downs are all described in several researches dealing with teachers with LD (Duquette, 2000; Ferri, Keefe & Gregg, 2001; Ferri, Connor, Solis, Valle & Volpitta, 2005; Vogel & Sharoni, 2012).

6. Student-Teachers with LD – Disclosure of LD

On one hand, student-teachers with LD hesitate to expose their learning disabilities fearing to be considered stupid. On the other hand some use the LD as an excuse for their failure.

The following protocol which is a part of a report by the staff in the Support Center points to this problem relating to one specific early childhood student-teacher:

"The student said she doesn't want to reveal her disabilities and she struggles to hide it from people who evaluate her (tutor and mentor)." In the next protocol after the beginning of the training process:

"The Student came crying to the Support Center because she felt offended by her mentor. She said she didn't use any written material because she was afraid her mentor will see her writing difficulties and her spelling mistakes. She feels her mentor thinks she is stupid, because she is not investing time and effort and doesn't take notes...she added she cannot use a written plan when she is in the middle of an activity with the children"...It's very common that a student who doesn't bring a notebook and/or has a lot of spelling mistakes is judged as stupid or lazy.

This student's main concern was not to expose her spelling mistakes and besides, she didn't see the benefit of writing the activities if she couldn't use it while working.

In the support center students are recommended to reveal their LD to their tutors and mentors so the students won't be considered unintelligent. According to the same protocol the student was advised in the Support Center:

"Writing helps to organize ideas...it reflects seriousness and shows responsibility for the written material, also it's easier for the mentor to understand your activity plan..."

As a 'student with LD', this student didn't evaluate correctly the importance of literacy and had to be encouraged to put more effort into academic skills like reading and writing.

"Exposing her LD will help her dare to write with spelling mistakes and her mentor to except her deficiencies".

To recommend students to reveal their LD is not enough unless he finds solutions to cope with the problems in class.

The Support Center protocol reports some practical help the student got:

"The student learned new strategies, like working with memory support cards which include either key words or pictures and symbols....the student was advised to rehearse each activity in front of her colleagues in the Support Center before practicing it in kindergarten."

The Support Center advices the student-teacher how and when to expose his LD, but directs him not to use the LD as an excuse. Some articles about teachers

and adults with LD deal with the issue of disclosure of the LD. They also discuss the importance of disclosure only after earning respect as employees (Madaus, Gerber & Price, 2008) and the importance of serving as a model for their own pupils with LD (Duquette, 2000; Ferri, Keefe & Gregg, 2001; Ferri, Connor, Solis, Valle & Volpitta, 2005; Sharoni & Vogel, 2012).

Chapter 6: Discussion

Internal and External Inputs

Student-teachers with LD, although disadvantaged, are the prime of their group. They would not have reached higher education and go through the filters of high school and college if not so bright and motivated (Chapter 2 – Part B-7). They can become good teachers, with appropriate enhancement and empowerment. The goal of this dissertation is to find and describe factors that influence the empowerment process of student-teachers with LD. I labeled these factors 'internal inputs' – those of the reactions of students themselves to their educational context, and 'external inputs' – those of their environment (including their tutors and mentors). I would like to compare the internal and external inputs drawn from research literature to inputs derived from the data of this study.

Most components of internal and external inputs are drawn from research literature. Each of these inputs found in research literature is backed up in my study, but specified and detailed in regards to student-teachers with LD in practicum.

The internal inputs relate to traits and attributes of the specific population of these students themselves. They are dealt with in three theoretical chapters, as discussed in research literature:

1. In Chapter 2 - Part A - 'Empowerment' - as part of workers' 'Individual Empowerment within Organizations'. The internal inputs mentioned: personality traits (such as self-efficacy and motivation), and personal beliefs.
2. In Chapter 2 - Part B - 'Students with LD in the Educational System'. The main internal inputs are the phenomenon of LD, and students' self determination skills: problem-solving skills, learning about oneself (self-awareness, learning about the disabilities and abilities), goal-setting (both short-term and long-term), and self-management (self-regulation), self-concept, and LD disclosure skills.
3. In Chapter 2 – Part C, 'Practicum'. The student-teachers' internal inputs, namely, their beliefs as expressed in practicum, are explained at length (relating to the general student-teachers' population, not to student-teachers with LD).

Comparing points 1-3 to findings of my research:

1. In Chapter 5 –Parts A and B - 'Findings' - personality traits are exposed when interviewees answered the question about student-teachers' weaknesses and strengths. Tutors and mentors mentioned aggression and oversensitivity describing students' disadvantages, and sensitivity (towards children) as a positive characteristic. All tutors, mentors, and students talked about students with LD's extremely high motivation.
2. Self-determination skills are exposed in Chapter 5 – Parts A and B - 'Findings' – tutors, mentors, and students discussed the ability to cope with the students' disabilities in practicum. Students expressed their awareness of their problems and presented different solutions they found to cope successfully. They also referred to the possibility to disclose their LD to their tutors and mentors in practicum.
3. Personal beliefs are not exposed directly, although in Chapter 5 –Part B - 'Findings' - four students illustrated their harsh school history. Consequently they brought with them some pre-training beliefs concerning teachers, pupils and school life.

The external inputs of mentors and tutors who supervise these students relate to the tutors' and mentors' characteristics and patterns as well as their influence on important environmental factors. They are dealt with in two theoretical chapters:

1. In Chapter 2 - Part A - 'Empowerment' as part of workers' 'Social Structured Empowerment within Organizations'. The external inputs mentioned: power, knowledge, information, reward (reinforcement), opportunities for job autonomy, freedom to be creative, feeling trusted and respected, and participating in decision making.
2. In Chapter 3 - Part C - 'Practicum'. The external inputs are: the tutors' and mentors' regulation towards critical reflection by quality feedback, their decisions about the students' placement in an appropriate setting, their role perception (relating to the general student-teachers' population, not to student-teachers with LD).

Comparing points 1-2 to findings of my research:

1. The external inputs mentioned in research literature are all expressed in my research in Chapter 5 – Part A and B - 'Findings' when tutors, mentors, and students expose their perception as to the tutors' and mentors' role in practicum. The supporting, yet professional tutor or mentor provides the student with means of power, knowledge, and information about the class and school, as well as reinforcement, opportunities for teaching autonomy, and freedom to be creative in the

mentor's class. The student should feel he is trusted and respected, and be able to participate in decision making.

2. These factors or inputs lead to the very important self-regulation point of critical reflection. In my research critical reflection is illustrated in Chapter 5 – Part A and B - 'Findings'. Critical reflection is based on self awareness of the problems that arise in class. Tutors, mentors, and student-teachers with LD are aware of these students' deficiencies and explain ways of coping with them. It is also emphasized when discussing tutors' and mentors' role. Many interviewees see critical reflection as part of this role.

Beyond the inputs depicted, in Chapter 5 – Part A - 'Findings', tutors/mentors-interviewees revealed their patterns of coping styles. The data is arranged according to categories set up in the first three stages (1-3) mentioned in Chapter 4 (Research Method - part 3 – Research Procedure).

The supervisors also exposed unexpected insights, they were not aware of. These insights uncovered an additional external input – tutors' and mentors' patterns of approach and judgment (static or dynamic, as explained subsequently). This important aspect has a great impact on the tutors' and mentors' judgment which contributes to the overall empowerment of student-teachers with LD. The data is arranged according to categories set up in the last two stages (4-5) mentioned in Chapter 4 (Research Method - part 3 – Research Procedure).

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The learning disabilities of student-teachers with LD usually influence their performance as novice teachers. Therefore, at the beginning of their training period they lack self-confidence, follow their mentor blindly, and do not dare to initiate or be creative. Consequently, the implementation of the empowerment of these student-teachers means a transition from a state of insecurity to a relative control of their teaching experience, through a constant process of change and development.

The way the tutor, mentor, and the student-teacher himself interpret the student's teaching and progress has an enormous impact on his empowerment and is dependent on the human relations and connections the student forms during practice. It is therefore only reasonable that this process expands over his period of practice at least; it depends on the people the student-teacher meets along his /her professional path and on the environment where his learning-to-teach occurs. The empowerment process is influenced by internal inputs, like the student's personality and external inputs significantly linked to his tutor and mentor.

The Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model of Students-Teachers with LD, which I built, focuses on the process of the professional empowerment as formed by the students' cycle of framing. This cycle is based on students' ability to 'frame' their teaching experience, and attach a meaning to issues coming up during their lesson in class. Appropriate framing of the teaching situations, is important for the understanding of events that occur during practice. By framing, the student-teacher makes sense of situations, actions, and knowledge, putting them into a cognitive 'frame', aiming at improving his teaching. Student-teachers with LD often have difficulties encompassing the whole context of the teaching situation, and therefore their framing might be inaccurate. Proper framing is difficult for novice student-teachers, and more so for students with LD, for it relies on a strong initial teaching-self which they often lack at the beginning of their training.

Students with LD are regular student-teachers except for their LD limitations; therefore the internal and external inputs of the following model (except the LD input) apply to all student-teachers. Still, each of them focuses on special aspects concerning student-teachers with LD. The model is based on the 'Integrated Framework of School-Based Learning Model' in initial Teacher Education⁶, which contains the components relevant for the building of the teaching-self and framing. It also integrates four Empowerment models –

⁶ Tang, 2004

'Individual and Group Power Model'⁷, the 'Psychological Empowerment Model in the Workplace'⁸, the 'Nomological Network of Psychological Empowerment Model'⁹, and the 'Partial Nomological Network of Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace'¹⁰.

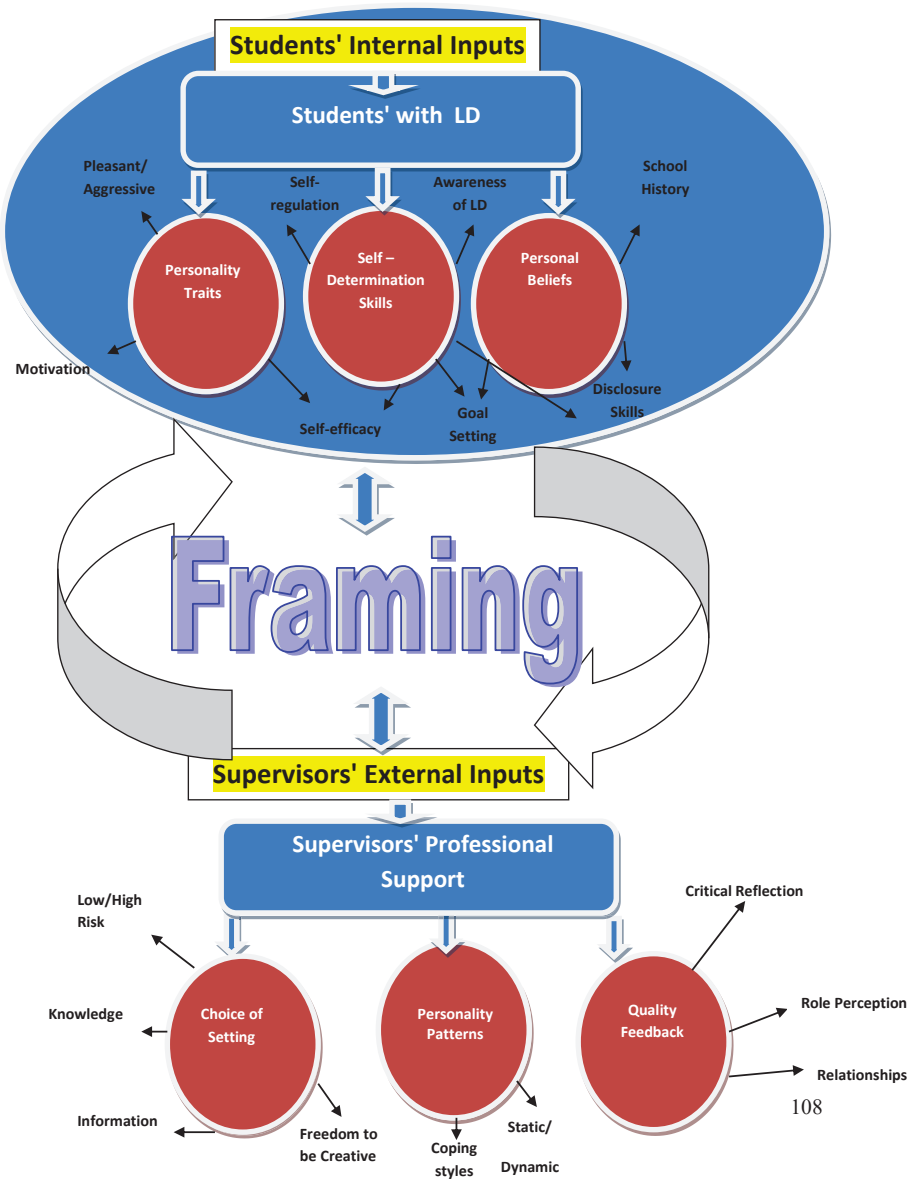
⁷ Linden & Arad, 1996

⁸ Thomas & Velthouse, 1990

⁹ Zimmerman, 1995

¹⁰ Spreitzer, 1995

The Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model
of Student-Teachers with LD in Practicum



The next sections explicate the model's categories of inputs, as related to the empowerment of students with LD in practicum and specified in this research.

Internal inputs of student-teachers with LD are all personal factors that influence their feelings and actions in their training school, all factors with which they enter the training program, but can change as the student-teachers develop professionally.

LD are the main internal input which characterizes these students and many of their difficulties. Their problems might include: literacy difficulties, memory problems and ADHD. The LD input affects all other internal inputs.

Students' Personal Beliefs – the input of negative school history and pre-training influences, as illustrated in the model, emphasize the special impact of the sometimes miserable school biography of students with LD. As the result of previous unfavorable schooling experiences, they may enter college with some idealistic ideas. Their training experience in class should enable them to adapt their initial beliefs to reality.

Students' Personality Traits - the personal traits of student-teachers with LD may help or hinder their development and therefore encourage or inhibit their success and Empowerment. Student-teachers with LD possess positive traits like high motivation in order to compensate for their disabilities. As a result they work hard, invest time, and repeat tasks to achieve success. Many students with LD have social qualities and are highly appreciated by their peers. The successful student-teachers with LD possess self-determination skills like: self-awareness (of LD), problem-solving and self-management skills etc. These qualities help them to cope with their problems. In contrast, they might have traits which interfere with their progress. Those traits include the lack of self-efficacy, a weak teaching self, over sensitivity and tendency to take offence.

External inputs of student-teachers with LD are all factors that impact their training.

Professional Support – the main external input is the tutors' and mentors' choices for the student and their professional support. Mentors serve as role models implementing higher education curriculum and approach. Tutors and mentors should invest efforts to provide the student-teachers with LD with opportunities to teach independently, using their own methods and ways. In order to enable initiative and creative teaching they should present them with proper knowledge, information about school and class, give them the freedom to dare, and overall reinforce them when possible.

Tutors' and mentors' Choice of Appropriate placement - tutors' and mentors should be aware of the adequate class and school of their student-teachers with LD and provide them with a 'low-risk' but challenging setting at the beginning of their training. The placement of student-teachers with LD is crucial for their enhancement and encourages them to participate and be involved in the school community.

Tutors' and mentors' Quality Feedback – the external input of feedback conversations between student-teachers with LD and their tutors and mentors is more complicated because of the students' limitations. These sessions should raise the awareness of learning disabilities' impact on the student's teaching and point to possible ways to improve in the future. One of the most important skills to achieve this is critical reflection – the ability to look back onto the situation and find out the best solution. This reflective proficiency is not easy to obtain for most students, and is even more difficult for student-teachers with LD.

Tutors' and mentors' patterns of coping and approaching the student-teachers – tutors' and mentors' beliefs, approach, values, as well as their judgment are important external inputs for students' empowerment, and especially vital for students with LD. On one hand tutors and mentors should certainly not be biased towards students with LD, and on the other hand they should not be lenient towards them. They should treat these students in a professional-supportive way. The encouragement of the dynamic type of tutor and mentor who believe in students' ability to change and improve is especially significant for student-teachers with LD. In contrast, the static type of tutors' and mentors' might interfere with the student's progress.

Chapter 8: Contributions and Suggestions

1. Contributions

I would like to point out the contributions of my model to the research of students with LD in practicum:

1. The 'Empowerment-Framing-Cycle-Model of Student-Teachers with LD'.

This model deals specifically with students with learning disabilities. The concept of empowerment is derived from the social context and related to deprived sectors or communities. Students with LD belong to a disadvantaged sector in the general students' society, and as such the process of empowerment is even more relevant to them.

2. The empowerment occurs essentially with the mentors and tutors intervention.

Tutors and mentors are crucial in the training process of student-teachers with LD. They are their main coaches in college and school, although they are not experts on learning disabilities. Encountering student-teachers with LD, mentors and tutors frequently are not aware of the students' problems, interpreting their behavior wrongly, or feeling aggravated and helpless when trying to help them. In the field of practicum there should be awareness of these students' special needs and of the possible inputs that mentors and tutors may contribute to their empowerment and success as teachers. The fundamental role tutor and mentor play in the practicum environment, emphasizes their influence on these student-teachers' training process.

3. 3. Empowerment research literature does not apply necessarily to Education and school.

This model tries to integrate empowerment theories in working organizations with school as an organization, student-teachers as 'employees', and mentors and tutors as 'managers' to some extent.

4. The dynamic and static patterns of coping of tutors and mentors.

The analysis of mentors' and tutors' narratives and their answers to the three questions (students' strengths, weaknesses and coping) brought up the approach of the 'dynamic' and 'static' patterns of approaches of tutors and mentors.

Tutors and mentors labeled as 'dynamic' emphasized their main goal – to see their student change and improve. They looked for change in both performance and personal traits, depending on the specific student. Other tutors and mentors,

labeled as 'static', established their opinion about their student in the beginning of his training. They thought that some traits are inherent and therefore unchangeable. Of course, as mentioned in this study, tutors and mentors are not of a 'pure' pattern, but somewhere on the scale between 'dynamic' and 'static'.

2. Further Research Suggestions

1. It's interesting to further investigate and reveal whether the tutors' and mentors' patterns of approach (static or dynamic) changes when dealing with different groups of students like students from deprived families. Furthermore, is the orientation of tutors and mentors, whether static or dynamic, a feature that could change towards various individuals and according to different circumstances.

2. The interviews revealed eight patterns of coping styles of tutors and mentors concerning student-teachers with LD. Another possible direction for investigation could deal with the question whether the tutors' and mentors' patterns of styles in regards to students with LD tends to be more task-oriented or more personal- oriented, in comparison to their approach to other student-teachers. Are the tutors and mentors lenient or more demanding towards these student-teachers?

Speaking of student-teachers with LD as a group might be misleading. People tend to generalize a phenomenon and categorize people in order to make sense and give their surroundings some meaning. Since every tutors' and mentors' meets different student-teachers with LD, he might categorize this population according to his personal experience, and may not always take into consideration that each and every student-teacher with LD is unique.

An important overall suggestion is to strive for closer relationships between the main student-teachers with LD's field supervisors (the mentor and the tutor) and the support center practicum coordinators. In the case of teaching difficulties, all supervisors in the field of training should observe each student-teacher with LD while instructing in class. Together with the student they should discuss his unique difficulties as well as his strengths and tailor the appropriate intervention suited for his enhancement and empowerment.

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